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ABSTRACT

The Families Matter series of papers from the Harvard Family Research Project advances the concept of family-centered child care, advocating an approach to early childhood education that addresses the development of the child and family together. Grounded in family support principles, which build on family strengths and work from a community's culture and resources, family-centered child care incorporates positive attitudes about working with parents and practical activities to serve the family. Asserting that a key place to promote widespread use of family support principles and practices is through the child care training system, the papers that make up the series focus on how the child care field trains providers to include family support. This volume in the series examines child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), private and public agencies that provide support and services to more than 2 million parents and providers. This volume profiles the family-supportive services and training efforts of CCR&Rs, drawing from a national survey and in-depth agency interviews. Innovative delivery of training and strategies for linking this delivery with family-centered training content also are discussed. The report suggests that through their philosophy and services, CCR&Rs demonstrate many ways of moving families from the margins to the center of child care practice, and through more consistent application of this knowledge to training efforts, providers' practices can be influenced. CCR&R agency profiles are included. Appendices contain survey materials. Contains 37 references. (EV)

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FAMILIES MATTER

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies: Training Child Care Providers to Support Families

Holly M. Kreider
Tracey L. Hurd

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

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With an Introduction by

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT
Cambridge, MA
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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Founded in 1983 by Dr. Heather Weiss, the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) is today at the center of a national movement to strengthen and support American families. HFRP's pathbreaking research provides practitioners, researchers, and policymakers with timely, insightful information about effective family support initiatives.

Disseminating its research widely, HFRP links people, programs, ideas, and resources to create innovative family support programs and services and family-sustaining policies. HFRP's research helps states create systems to monitor and assess programs and services, and helps communities better integrate family support services in neighborhood programs. Using HFRP data, schools are learning more about the specific benefits of parent involvement and the best strategies for successfully engaging the entire family. HFRP's research findings are enabling practitioners to design culturally appropriate programs, and helping training and education programs effectively prepare teachers to work with families.

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THE *FAMILIES MATTER* SERIES

Heather Weiss

The idea of family-centered child care, which combines the care of children with support for the family, has gained prominence in recent years (Anderson, 1996; Galinsky & Weissbourd, 1992; Poersch & Blank, 1996; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997). The appeal of family-centered child care lies in the potential to meet several goals to improve the quality of life for families: the fostering of continuity between home and program, improved parenting knowledge and skills for parents and caregivers alike, and the ability to minimize family stress through the provision of direct or referred services. Family-centered child care also seeks to reinforce consumer participation and to validate parents'[1] rights to influence the programs in which their children are enrolled. In the absence of national child care standards, and given the various types of caregiving arrangements available, parents need to monitor programs for compatibility with their own expectations (Cochran, 1993). Family-centered child care is equally valuable for the type of relationship it develops with families, by adopting principles of mutual respect, awareness of family strengths, and the primacy of the family in child development.

This focus on the family broadens the roles of child care providers: They are expected not only to care for children but also to serve families. Most providers, however, enter the profession because they enjoy being with children. They do not necessarily have an interest in children's families, nor are they necessarily prepared to work with them. How providers can be trained for family-centered child care and what knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to develop are the subject of the *Families Matter* series.

The *Families Matter* series examines the ways in which both children and families are supported by family-centered child care programs, and the training that is being offered to providers so that they can work competently with families. The reports in the series consist of 1) a study of the principles and practices of family-centered child care programs and their implications for training, 2) a study of the roles of child care resource and referral agencies in family support services and training, and 3) a study of the training offered by two-year colleges to prepare early childhood providers to work with families.

Challenges of Family-Centered Child Care

An estimated 13 million children are in child care and other early childhood programs each day (Adams & Poersch, 1996), underscoring the childrearing responsibilities shared by families and child care providers. The regular contact between families and child care programs suggests that child care is an ideal arena for extending support to families. However, both professional and interpersonal factors make it difficult to realize this potential. The culture of the profession — consisting of beliefs, norms, and attitudes — has emphasized an elaboration of child development principles and standards of practice; less attention has been paid to the important roles of families and communities in child development. Without an emphasis on building

[1] The term *parent* extends to all adult kin caregivers who actively participate in a child's upbringing.

relationships with families, dominant professional perspectives can overlook the knowledge and competencies of parents in childrearing.

Perceptions of early childhood professionals and those of parents regarding the quality and content of care are often quite different. Child care professionals define quality in terms of structural attributes such as staff-to-child ratios, licensing, and training — factors of little importance to many parents (Clarke-Stewart, Gruber & Fitzgerald, 1994; Larner, 1996). Compared to professional ratings of child care centers, parents tend to overestimate the quality of their children's programs (Cryer and Burchinal, 1997). While the early childhood field has endorsed "developmentally appropriate practice," low-income and less educated parents tend to expect more structured and didactic approaches (Stipek, Milburn, Clements & Daniels, 1992). Moreover, views about ways to nurture, discipline, and socialize a child diverge when families and providers come from different cultural backgrounds (Chang, Muckelroy & Pulido-Tobiassen, 1996). Because one of the goals of family-centered child care is to involve families in influencing program directions, the dissimilarity between professional and parent viewpoints stands out as an issue that must be addressed at the levels of policy, professional development, and service delivery.

The relationship between parents and providers, too, has often been less than ideal. Feelings of ambivalence — on the part of both the providers and parents — about work and family life often spill over to caregiving relationships. Providers who believe that mothers should care for their infants and toddlers are more judgmental about them (Galinsky & Weissbourd, 1992; Modigliani, 1996). Working parents, on the other hand, often experience guilt and a sense of loss of control over childrearing. Additionally, young, poor, single, and minority parents are the least likely to be viewed positively by and receive support from their children's caregivers (Galinsky & Weissbourd, 1992; Kontos & Wells, 1986).

There is also some evidence that parents may seek less rather than more involvement. Providers are likely to regard home-program communication as more important than parents do (Ghazoini & Readdich, 1994). Many parents do not have the time for conversations beyond the very brief drop-off and pick-up times (Endsley & Minnish, 1991; Powell, 1980). Even though some programs seek to provide expanded support, parents are less likely to consider it important. They may look for social support in other settings and prefer to keep family situations a private matter (Ghazoini & Readdich, 1994). Where family involvement is mandated in subsidized programs, some parents experience increased stress, which may suggest difficulties in managing both employment and involvement (Parker, Piotrkowski, Kessler-Sklar, Baker, Peay & Clark, 1997).

These differences are complex in nature and require skilled communication and negotiation skills. Unfortunately, most providers have relatively little training and supervision in supporting parents (Powell, 1991). As long as training remains child-focused, the providers who work with families cannot be expected to demonstrate family support principles in practice nor to be effective brokers of consumer education (Larner, 1995). Furthermore, the training of child care providers is a patchwork of different sources, posing a challenge to coordination and accreditation (Morgan, 1998).

Opportunities for Advancing Family-Centered Child Care

Family-centered child care requires an integrated policy approach, in which improved training and professional development play a key role. Preservice and inservice training programs that are comprehensive and continuous have the capacity to influence providers so that they are better prepared to support families (Dunst, 1994). Several family support programs have developed training models that impart knowledge about family functioning, human development, and group process, as well as skills related to communication and relationship building (Porter & Rice, 1995). These and other resources can be drawn upon to meet the specific needs and interests of providers.

Parent perspectives on child care also provide an opportunity to shape training in ways that foster the development of meaningful relationships and appropriate supports. Parents seek quality caregiving and usually place a high value on features that are characteristic of a family-support model. Parents look for trusting and loving caregivers, opportunities for healthy child socialization and learning, compatibility with the provider's childrearing philosophy, and ongoing coordination between home and provider (Clarke-Stewart, Gruber & Fitzgerald, 1994; Hofferth, Brayfield, Deich & Holcomb, 1991; Mitchell, Cooperstein & Lamer, 1992; Modigliani, 1996). They prefer child care that reflects their values and views on childrearing, making for greater continuity in home and program environments (Clarke-Stewart, Gruber & Fitzgerald, 1994). When parents use early childhood programs as a resource, they tend to value the work of providers more and develop more constructive relationships with them (Galinsky & Weissbourd, 1992; Schultz, Lopez, & Hochberg, 1996). Frequent communication between providers and parents broadens the content of information exchanges to family-related and not just child-related topics (Powell, 1980), suggesting that child care can be a part of a network of informal support for parents.

Conditions today favor incorporating family support into the training of child care providers. Well-publicized research on brain development in infants revealing the importance of providing stimulating environments for children at the earliest ages has brought national attention to the care of young children. Policymakers are allocating more resources for quality improvement in child care. States are already allocating some of their existing child care quality improvement grants to expand training for providers and to develop collaborative relationships among local agencies in developing training systems. The top priority for training paves the way for including family support training.

Additionally, several new programs for young children require a family support component. These programs include state-funded early education, Head Start and child care collaboration, and community-based family resource centers. Their growth is likely to increase the need for providers trained to work with both children and families.

Documenting the Challenges and Opportunities

The series seeks to facilitate learning among those responsible for the training of the early childhood workforce. This group of practitioners consists mainly of program administrators, trainers, and educators. Our work differs from studies of family support curricula (Porter & Rice, 1995) in that we set out to examine the status of teaching and service delivery practices as they exist in a variety of child care programs and training institutions. By documenting the family support components in different types of child care settings, we derived a comprehensive training framework. We then used this framework to understand the status of family-centered training in resource and referral agencies and two-year colleges. Throughout the series, we identify issues and promising practices, and we offer guidelines for advancing a family-centered approach to both training and practice.

The method of researching and writing these reports has been practitioner-based and practitioner-oriented. Our experience has shown that many of the program administrators and educators in the early childhood field desire information about what their peers are doing and how they are doing it, and find it useful to learn how their peers have arrived at creative solutions to recurring problems. They are also interested in addressing common practice dilemmas and in understanding how new ways of doing business becomes routine practice. By documenting the ways in which practitioners have developed family-centered service and training programs and have addressed implementation issues creatively and comprehensively, we believe that practitioners can learn from one another and find better ways to integrate family support in their work.

The research for the series examined the ways in which programs, resource and referral agencies, and two-year colleges focus on developing family-centered child care through training or service delivery. Although we did not interview parents, a number of studies on parent perspectives on early care and education guided our work. The mixed assessments described earlier — both the discrepancies in parent and provider attitudes and the promise of supportive relationships — point to the importance of relationship building, flexibility, mutual respect, and shared learning, which also form the basis of a family-centered approach.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies: Training Child Care Providers to Support Families is a volume in the *Families Matter* series that examines child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), a promising venue for family-centered child care services and professional development nationwide. CCR&Rs are private and public agencies that provide support and services to more than 2 million parents and providers (combined). This volume profiles the family-supportive services and training efforts of CCR&Rs, drawing from a national survey and in-depth agency interviews. CCR&R services and training are considered through the comprehensive training framework mentioned above. Innovative delivery of training and strategies for linking this delivery with family-centered training content also are discussed. We suggest that through their philosophy and services, CCR&Rs demonstrate many ways of moving families from the margins to the center of child care practice, and through more consistent application of this knowledge to training efforts, providers' practices can be influenced.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES: TRAINING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

A family focus in child care settings can foster the healthy development of children and families and nurture mutually enhancing parent-provider partnerships. Family–centered child care is "an approach that addresses the needs of the child *and* the family. It is grounded in family support principles, which build on family strengths and work from a community's culture and resources" (Lopez, 1996). Family-centered child care recognizes the centrality of family health and well being to the healthy development of the child. "Healthy child development requires strong, nurturing families that in turn are nurtured and supported by individuals and institutions within the community" (Harvard Family Research Project [HFRP], 1993).

An essential component of family-centered child care rests in the professional development of child care providers. Only when providers are trained to understand and involve families in the care of children will family-centered child care become a reality. This paper examines the family-centered training opportunities available to child care providers through Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs), a common source of provider training nationwide.

CCR&Rs have families at the heart of all their efforts (NACCRRA, 1996). But how does that focus extend to the provider training offered at CCR&Rs? This question, along with others listed below, guided the research for this report.

Guiding Research Questions

This report addresses four central questions:

1) How do the philosophies and services of CCR&Rs reflect a family focus?
2) How does child care provider[2] training offered through CCR&Rs reflect a family focus?
3) What training approaches do CCR&Rs utilize?
4) What lessons do CCR&Rs offer for making child care more family-centered?

[2] The term 'child care provider' is used here and throughout this report to refer to early childhood education professionals working in center-based and home-based child care settings.

The Focus of CCR&Rs

The primary function of CCR&Rs is to help families secure child care. They do this by acting as mediating agencies for families, child care providers, and communities. Specifically, CCR&Rs:

- Offer support to families who are balancing the demands of family and work
- Compile, analyze, and share child care related information with parents, child care providers, and their communities
- Support individuals and programs that care for children (including providing training)
- Build inter-agency connections which foster policies that support children, families, and child care (NACCRRA, 1996).

Additionally, CCR&Rs deliver services to parents and child care providers by collaborating with community agencies, such as community colleges and family support programs (Anderson, 1996). CCR&Rs also are committed to community outreach and policy development. These two functions are critical to supporting a breadth of family-centered child care and securing its place in our broader society.

Why Examine CCR&Rs?

Examining CCR&R services and training is essential to understanding the state of family-centered practices for several reasons. First, CCR&Rs have historically been family-centered. Family support is literally at the roots of the history of CCR&Rs. For example, in California in the 1970s, parents such as Patty Siegel and Arlyce Currie formed Childcare Switchboard and BANANAS, the first CCR&Rs, to meet the needs of women moving into the workplace. These founding agencies helped secure resource and referral agencies across the state (undated materials from the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network). CCR&Rs are now a national phenomenon and a rich source of family-centered philosophy, practices, and training.

Second, CCR&Rs serve a very large number of families and providers. They serve urban, suburban, and rural areas of every state. A 1994 survey indicated that CCR&Rs assisted almost 1.5 million families and trained almost 400,000 providers (NACCRRA, 1996). A survey on professional development for child care professionals identified CCR&Rs as a primary source of training (Morgan, Azer, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi & McGimsey, 1993). Appendix A illustrates the role of CCR&Rs in the child care training system. The prevalence of CCR&Rs in the lives of families and in the work life of child care providers places these agencies in pivotal roles in which to promote a family focus. A report by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) seconds this observation: "CCR&Rs' unique relationship with providers offers many opportunities to help [providers] become more responsive to families" (Anderson, 1996, p.44).

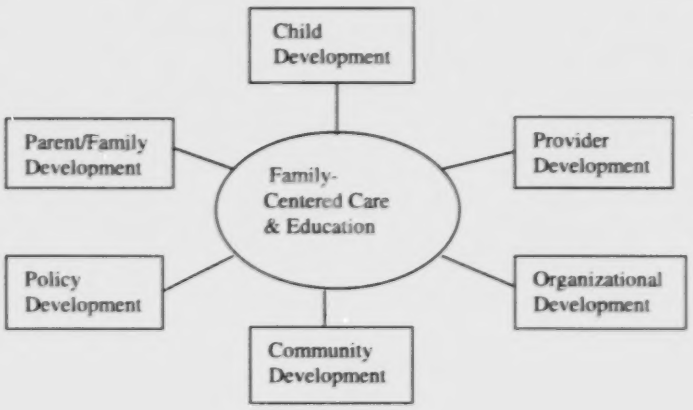
Third, CCR&Rs are one of the most organized mediums for provider training. While some agencies are independent, most work under the umbrella of larger (often state) networks. Although state networks generally do not train child care providers, they do train trainers. These

networks, along with NACCRRA, make CCR&Rs an organized and influential lever for change and a source of valuable lessons for the child care field.

A Framework of Family-Centered Service and Training Goals

An existing framework of family-centered service and training goals for teachers and child care providers serves as a conceptual organization for this report (Coffman, in progress; Lopez, Weiss, & Dorros, in progress). Specifically, CCR&R practitioners interviewed for this study described services and training that strive toward the six goals detailed in Figure 1. The achievement of each of these goals has important bearing on whether and how families are supported.

Figure 1:
Framework of Service and Training Goals



• **Child Development** — CCR&R services and training can promote child development in family-centered ways. Specifically, parents and providers can be encouraged to work in partnership to foster children's healthy development, including their safety, socio-emotional growth, good nutrition, and education.

• **Provider Development** — CCR&R practices can also create opportunities for the personal and professional growth of child care providers. By helping providers balance the demands of work and family life, plan their own professional development, and manage time and stress associated with their work, providers can refocus their time and energy toward quality relationships with families.

• **Organizational Development** — Organizational policies and practices in child care settings can easily hinder or support family involvement. Services and training that encourage parent advisory boards, jointly constructed parent-provider contracts, and other family-friendly practices address the issue of organizational development in a family-centered way.

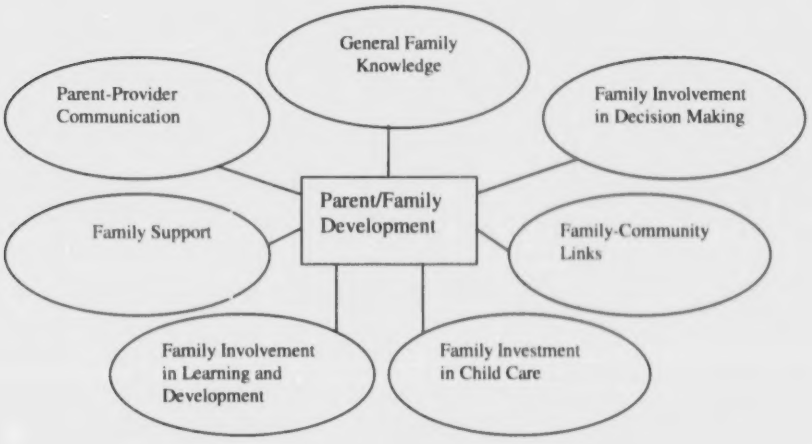
• **Community Development** — Knowledge of community resources and needs, and skills in collaborating with local agencies and groups can help providers meet the needs of the specific families in their community and help them connect families more easily to community resources.

• **Policy Development** — CCR&R services and training can model and support providers' awareness and activism in the political arena. Specifically, providers can learn how to help families deal with the impact of welfare reform and other policies affecting them and their children. Training can also support providers' involvement in policymaking to improve children's and families' lives.

• **Parent/Family Development** — By conveying principles of family support in services and training, CCR&Rs can encourage families to participate in their children's care and education, and can help providers recognize the importance of supporting and involving families in child care.

Within this broad framework, the goal of parent/family development speaks most directly to our interest in family-centered child care services and provider training. Prior work at HFRP (Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez 1997) breaks down this goal into seven specific types of family support and involvement in child care. This typology of parent/family development allows family-centered CCR&R services and training to be mapped in more detail (See Figure 2).

Figure 2:
Parent/Family Development Goal:
Types of Family Involvement and Support



• *General Family Knowledge* — Services and training that address this goal help give providers a general knowledge of families, and an awareness and respect for different family structures, lifestyles, and cultural values.

• *Family Involvement in Decision Making* — Services and training can lead to opportunities for families to participate in decision making around child care and family issues, policy, programs, and curriculum development.

• *Family-Community Links* — Through training, providers can learn to support families' social, educational, and social service needs by connecting them to parenting programs, peer networks, family centers, and other community resources.

• *Family Investment in Child Care* — Providers can learn to see parents and families as resources to child care. Knowing how to create opportunities for parent-provider partnerships by inviting and utilizing parent volunteers in and out of the classroom is a useful skill for increasing family investment, as is the skill of informing parents on ways in which they can be advocates for quality child care.

• *Family Involvement in Learning and Development* — Services and training can promote providers' skills in encouraging family involvement in children's learning and development. Providers can help parents promote children's development outside of the child care setting by suggesting learning activities at home or in the community that complement the child care curriculum.

• *Family Support* — Services and training with this goal help providers learn to support families' child care and other family needs, such as adult education, housing, health, and mental health needs. Family-supportive practices also draw from strengths and assets of families.

• *Parent-Provider Communication* — Services and training that result in effective communication between families and child care providers, through a frequent and two-way exchange of information, achieve this foundational goal.

Multiple Methods Explore Viewpoint of CCR&R Practitioners

To understand services and training provided or facilitated by CCR&Rs, we turned to practitioners in the field. Practitioners have critical insights into the needs of families and child care providers that can lead to improved service delivery and training (Lopez & Dorros, 1996; Lopez, in progress). Practitioners in CCR&Rs work within networks of professionals and are interested in building policies that will support their agencies' work (NACCRRA, 1996). Time to put their reflections in writing is limited, however. This paper is an effort to share their reflections with other child care professionals and policymakers. It highlights interesting examples and organizing frameworks, rather than touting "exemplary" or "model" agencies, in hopes of guiding practitioners into further conversations and context-specific changes that will support and involve families in children's early care and education.

To achieve this objective, we first conducted a survey (See Appendix B) to gain a broad understanding of the family-centered training at CCR&Rs nationwide. One hundred seventy-three agencies responded to our survey (See Appendix C for method).

For an in-depth look at child care provider training at CCR&Rs, we next collected materials from and conducted interviews with informants from CCR&Rs in nine different states. We selected these CCR&Rs from a list of agencies nominated by NACCRRA board members and survey respondents. We selected agencies that had been nominated multiple times and that represented diverse geographical regions and demographics. These informants represent a sample of the diversity of CCR&Rs, which are each as unique as the communities they serve. Consequently, the agencies featured in this report do not represent the universe of successful agencies or practices, nor are they subjected to a rigorous evaluation by the authors; rather, they begin to map CCR&R training efforts and offer real-life ideas for how to carry out family-supportive work. (See Appendix D for nomination and selection procedure of CCR&Rs featured and Appendix E for interview questions).

In the following analysis, insights also are included from other informants who generously participated in less structured conversations about their agencies and the field. Table 1 summarizes the agencies featured as primary informants. Complete profiles of these agencies begin on page 41.

Table 1:
Summary of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

Agency Name	Contact Person	Type of Agency	State
Childcare Resources Birmingham, AL	Margaret Curry, Executive Director Barbara Scott Program Services Director	CCR&R	Alabama
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network San Francisco, CA	Patty Siegel Director	CCR&R State Network	California
El Comienzo California Child Care Initiative San Francisco, CA	Dolores Terrazas Senior Program Specialist	CCR&R State Network Initiative/ Project	
BANANAS Oakland, CA	Arlyce Currie Program Director	CCR&R	
Children's Council of San Francisco San Francisco, CA	Linnea Klee Executive Director Jan McMillan Program Director	CCR&R	
Work and Family Resource Center Denver, CO	Beth Pfalmer Director	CCR&R	Colorado
Florida Children's Forum Tallahassee, FL	Susan Muenchow Executive Director	CCR&R State Network	Florida
Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend Tallahassee, FL	Rue Luttrelle Executive Director	CCR&R	
Metro-Dade Child Development Services Miami, FL	Ana Adino Resource & Referral Coordinator	CCR&R	

Agency Name	Contact Person	Type of Agency	State
Child Care Resources of Waldo County — Belfast Area Child Care Services, Inc. Belfast, ME	Ann Simpson Program Director	CCR&R	Maine
Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc. Rochester, MN	Tutti Sherlock	CCR&R	Minnesota
Western Community Action Marshall, MN	Gail Gotz CCR&R Coordinator	CCR&R	
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc. Worthington, MN	Karen DeBoer CCR&R Coordinator	CCR&R	
The Child Care Connection Trenton, NJ	Nancy Thomson Director of Resource Development	CCR&R	New Jersey
Action for Children Columbus, OH	Betsy Loeb Assistant Director	CCR&R	Ohio
Family Connections Albany, OR	Bobbie Weber Chair	CCR&R	Oregon

The following descriptions summarize the agencies listed above. The findings of this report draw primarily from conversations with and materials from these twelve agencies, two networks, and one network initiative.

- **Childcare Resources** is a CCR&R in Birmingham, Alabama, serving low-income children and families. The agency manages a child care subsidy system and trains providers within this system to view families as customers as a way to ensure the livelihood of their business.

• **California Child Care Resource and Referral Network** was the first state network in existence. It supports CCR&Rs throughout California and manages several special projects, including a collaborative initiative to increase quality child care and a parent empowerment project.

• **El Comienzo** is a project sponsored by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network to train Spanish-speaking family child care providers and increase child care options in Latino communities.

• **BANANAS** is a CCR&R in Oakland, California, serving a diverse population in an urban area. The agency offers a wealth of workshops and publications for parents and child care providers.

• **Children's Council of San Francisco** is a CCR&R in San Francisco, California, serving a diverse population in an urban area. The agency runs a mental health consultation program and a parent empowerment program.

• **Work and Family Resource Center** is a CCR&R in Denver, Colorado, serving parents and providers in rural, urban, suburban, and resort communities. A training series offered through the agency addresses parent-provider communication, from basic skills to assertiveness and advanced problem-solving.

• **Florida Children's Forum** is a CCR&R network connecting 25 CCR&Rs in Florida. The network is piloting a scholarship training program, with coursework on families, for experienced providers and publishes a quarterly parent involvement newsletter for professionals.

• **Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend** is a multi-faceted agency serving children and families in Tallahassee, Florida. The CCR&R within this agency can easily refer families to other in-house services such as a food and clothing bank. Parents are also supported to become providers and parent educators through the agency.

• **Metro-Dade Child Development Services** is a CCR&R in Miami, Florida, which focuses its energy into direct services for parents and refers providers mainly to community colleges and professional associations for training.

• **Child Care Resources of Waldo County** is a CCR&R in Belfast, Maine, which serves a primarily low-income population in a rural region. The agency helps families struggling with issues of child abuse/neglect and economic hardship, and reaches isolated providers through a telephone helpline.

• **Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc.** is a CCR&R in Rochester, Minnesota, which serves urban, suburban, and rural families and providers. Although freestanding, the agency includes a number of programs, including a food program. In addition, a family advocate helps low-income families negotiate the child care voucher system.

• **Western Community Action** and **Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council** are two CCR&Rs in Minnesota that closely collaborate to serve parents and providers in rural areas. Specific trainings, such as a "Training-to-Go" series and Cultural Dynamics training, help providers consider families and cultural differences in childrearing.

• **The Child Care Connection** is a CCR&R in Trenton, New Jersey, which runs a special program to support young parents with drug and alcohol dependency. Cluster training supports providers serving needy families who use child care vouchers.

• **Action for Children** is a CCR&R in Columbus, Ohio, serving urban, suburban, and rural families and providers. An annual phone survey identifies potential parent volunteers for resources and leadership. A training module utilizes videos of parent and provider focus groups to help build parent-provider partnerships.

• **Family Connections** is a CCR&R within a multi-program family support department at a community college in Albany, Oregon. In addition to an annual fair and other direct services to families, the agency has developed a family–centered course and a credential program for child care providers.

GUIDING QUESTION ONE:

HOW DO THE PHILOSOPHIES AND SERVICES OF CCR&Rs REFLECT A FAMILY FOCUS?

FINDING ONE: CCR&Rs POSSESS A FAMILY-CENTERED AGENCY CULTURE.

Practitioners revealed an overall "agency culture" in CCR&Rs that considers and connects the home, child care setting, and larger community. This agency culture is reflected in both the philosophy and services of CCR&Rs. For example, a recent name change from "Linn-Benton Child Care Resource and Referral" to "Family Connections" symbolizes one CCR&R's shift from a child care focus to a broader family support focus. Several mission statements also attest to the family-centered philosophy of CCR&Rs:

> The Work and Family Resource Center verifies its family-centered approach through its mission "to develop programs and promote policies that support families and children."
>
> Childcare Resource's mission statement reflects its commitment to families and all others involved in the care and education of young children: "Childcare Resources promotes quality child care by providing information, education, and assistance to parents, employers, providers and the community."
>
> Using a collaborative process, Child Care Resource & Referral Inc. revised its mission statement several years ago. The revised statement attests to a family-centered agency that works "to ensure a positive beginning for all young children and their families through community partnerships."

In their interviews, agency practitioners describe how this mission is embodied in the numerous services provided at CCR&Rs — services that directly support children and their families, especially, but not exclusively, with their child care needs. The following section describes these services more fully.

FINDING TWO: CCR&R SERVICES PROMOTE PARENT/FAMILY DEVELOPMENT GOAL.

Not surprisingly, parent/family development is a prominent goal of CCR&R services to families, more so than the other goals presented in the service and training framework described in the introduction. Specifically, the sub-goal of family support — in the form of child care and parent education — is widely addressed through CCR&R services. Conversations with practitioners also revealed that family knowledge and parent[3]-provider communication are prevalent goals of

[3] The term *parent* is used here and throughout this report to signify a child's primary caregiver.

CCR&R services. These family-supportive goals are reflected in services that are culturally and economically sensitive and relevant, respond to community needs, allow a mutual and equal exchange, and empower families.

CCR&Rs meet the child care needs of families in different circumstances.
In keeping with their charter, family support in the form of child care is the most common type of family/parent development goal addressed through CCR&R services. These services are often tailored to meet the child care needs of families in different circumstances, including low-income families, working families, and families with special needs children.

Helping low-income families obtain child care is an emphasis at several of the CCR&Rs we studied. For example, several agencies provide the valuable service of helping families negotiate child care subsidy systems and welfare reform. As Jane Adams, former Program Coordinator of Child Care Resources of Waldo County, Maine, explains of recent welfare reform and the importance of CCR&Rs: "It's clear that with politics the way they are, that parents are going to have to speak up for their own needs and their children's."

> At Childcare Resources, management of federal and state child care subsidies to local communities, as well as a United Way-funded subsidy program for families who do not meet federal or state income eligibility requirements, provides a range of low-income families with valuable child care services.

> A family advocate at Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc. helps low-income families secure child care and other services, manage the child care voucher system, and gain support through a Nursery School Scholarship program for low-income two-parent families who choose to have the mother not work in the paid workforce.

CCR&Rs are also sensitive to the difficult balance of work and family life and have special services for some working families. Agencies commonly contract with large employers to provide enhanced child care referral services to employees with young children, providing referrals as quickly as within 24 hours.

> Families of corporate employees receive special services from Action for Children through "enhanced" referral service contracts. A phone line is dedicated to company employees and connects them to a counselor who will oversee all aspects of finding and screening child care, assessing openings, and even recruiting child care for families. Other services include needs assessments, newsletters, family wellness services, and "ask the expert" counseling.

> NACCRRA also assists CCR&Rs in their efforts to support working parents. This national organization circulates 300,000 copies of the *Daily Parent* newsletter to CCR&Rs, which can then distribute it to working parents or customize it to suit their specific population.

Parent education services support families.
A former staff member at Metro-Dade Child Development Services explained an ongoing aspect of supporting families at his agency: "Parent education has to be a part of every grant." Other agencies show a similar commitment to parent education:

> Child Care Resources of Waldo County has worked collaboratively to provide classes, parent support groups, and a home visiting program for teenage and adult parents as part of child abuse and neglect intervention mandated by the Department of Human Services. The programs attract, almost exclusively, low-income parents.

Parent education programs and other traditional CCR&R services also are supplemented and supported by additional services to families, which respond to families' different circumstances. For example, a standard practice at Child Care Resources of Waldo County is to provide child care and transportation services to parents participating in parent training programs or workshops. These additional services meet the specific needs of families living in rural Maine.

Culturally and economically sensitive services reflect goal of general family knowledge.
An awareness of and respect for different family structures, lifestyles, cultural values, and economic circumstances are inherent in many CCR&R services to families. The following examples show skill and sensitivity in dealing with cultural differences in choosing child care:

> Tonya Russell, a CCR&R specialist at the Muscogee Creek Nation Office for Child Care, notes that in her experience, tribal parents are more hesitant to share their child care preferences than are other parents. To ameliorate their reticence, Ms. Russell often shares her own experiences and opinions with parents and provides them with a program quality checklist. This approach helps her better serve the Muscogee parents.

> The Children's Council of San Francisco offers several bilingual and bicultural services to serve the needs of the diverse families in the area more efficiently, such as a newsletter written in two languages and bilingual counseling services. Issues of sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, and economic circumstance are always considered in the provision of services and training.

Comprehensive services reflect goal of family-community links.
The provision of non-child-care services to families, such as adult education, housing, health, and mental health services, reflects an understanding among CCR&R practitioners of the complex, interrelated, and real needs of families and can model for providers the kind of responsiveness and flexibility in meeting community needs that are cornerstones of family support. As Susan Muenchow, Executive Director of the Florida Children's Forum, explains, "Maybe it's not traditional, but it's of vital importance. How you start to support families and what you do might be different [from tradition]." One Florida CCR&R exemplified this philosophy by collaborating with others to help 40 families secure loans to buy homes.

One way in which CCR&Rs enhance family life is by facilitating links among families, child care, and the community. These services often serve dual goals of parent/family development and community development. For example, Metro-Dade Child Development Services worked with the police department, fire department, and local child care centers to create a plan for emergency child care for families who provide assistance during hurricanes and other crises. Also, CCR&Rs that contract with businesses to offer working families enhanced child care referral services promote both family and community/business development.

Families' social, educational, and social service needs are supported by connecting parents to child care, parenting programs, peer networks, family centers, and other community resources. Beth Pfalmer, Director of Childcare Resources, explains this facilitating role of CCR&Rs: "I view our role as the grease in the wheels, just a giant tub of axle grease. All the gears are there, all the machinery that's needed. It just gets bound up sometimes for a lack of lubrication." Other agencies and networks illustrate this service collaboration role:

> Family Connections is collaborating with other community agencies on a comprehensive initiative titled Student Arts Academics Recreation Sports (STARS). The before- and after-school program located in one community conveniently coordinates payment and services through a collaboration of the CCR&R, a local business, a school district, a library, non-profit human service agencies, and a parks and recreation department.
>
> Local family support agencies have a chance to display information and answer families' questions with the help of Family Resources (the umbrella department for Family Connections), which hosts an annual fair for adults and children. The fair offers a day of learning, celebration, and information to the community.
>
> A pilot community outposting program of the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network will bring child care information into the community— where families conduct the business of their daily lives. Staffed kiosks, to be placed in central community locations, such as supermarkets and laundromats, will be designed to be inviting to parents and informative about child care and other resources. Participating CCR&Rs will develop relationships with local community agencies to provide needed information to families.

Services that model respectful, two-way exchange reflect goal of parent-provider communication.

Many CCR&R services to families also model effective two-way communication skills. Newsletters and pamphlets for parents and providers model ways of discussing important child care issues. Courses for parents about choosing child care and courses for providers about parent-provider communication also model good communication with families. Phone assistance lines give help to both parents and providers, by offering mediation and advice on parent-provider conflicts. Both the philosophy and service of CCR&Rs address and work toward two-way communication between families and child care providers, an essential step in creating successful partnerships.

Action for Children created a video and training program called "Partners in Caring." Sparked by the frequency of calls from providers and parents complaining about each other, the CCR&R held focus groups of parents talking about what they like and do not like about their child care arrangements. They also held a focus group of providers talking about their experiences with parents. The resulting video is used in training and is available for parents and providers at the CCR&R, libraries, and other central places. Another video profiling and literally following three sets of parents in their process of trying to find child care was also created. Both of these videos strive toward improved communication and understanding between providers and parents.

Services that empower families reflect goal of family involvement in decision making and policy development.

Supporting parents' decision-making roles in child and family issues, policy, programs, and curriculum development demonstrates a belief in parents as valuable contributors to the field of early childhood care and education and a goal of family empowerment. For example, many agencies hire parents and other family members, such as grandparents, to help with training and phone line assistance. By placing parents in the "expert" role, CCR&Rs reverse traditional decision structures and allow parents to become influential in shaping program policies.

The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network developed a parent organizing project called The Parent Voices Project. Several California CCR&Rs, including BANANAS and the Children's Council of San Francisco, are involved in implementing this project to bring the parent voice back to the child care movement. As part of the project, parents in one city held house meetings to identify local issues such as traffic safety near child care centers and welfare reimbursement difficulties.

Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend implements the Parent Services Project (PSP), a national model for delivering family support and family development services in child care settings. PSP encourages a family-centered child care environment and strong parent-provider partnerships in caring for children. One way it does this is by training parents and providers together. In an example of how PSP has been a success in the agency, Rue Lutrelle notes that one parent reported that her involvement with the PSP program had given her the confidence to get involved with her son's PTA as soon as he entered school.

Each year, Action for Children surveys their family constituents and calls 11 percent of them for interviews (anywhere between 500 – 1000 families called per year). These surveys and interviews gather information about families, including requests for them to serve as volunteers around a child care issue of their choice. According to Susan Jakob, the agency now has a bank of people who can provide parent leadership as media contacts and other resources.

At the national level, NACCRRA empowers parents by training CCR&R practitioners to promote families' policy awareness and activism. CCR&Rs also keep databases on the latest political developments, and counselors learn to help parents see the "bigger picture," by giving them information about advocacy and policy-making (Vinci, 1998).

***

The range of goals addressed through CCR&Rs' services to families creates a family-centered agency culture, one that models strong connections with families and communities for child care providers. But the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to create a family-centered culture of care can be only partially transmitted through observation of the philosophy and services of CCR&Rs. Direct training efforts with providers are also critical to changing the focus of child care from child-centered to family-centered (Dunst, 1994), as the next section describes.

GUIDING QUESTION TWO:

HOW DOES CHILD CARE PROVIDER TRAINING OFFERED THROUGH CCR&Rs REFLECT A FAMILY FOCUS?

FINDING ONE: THE TOPIC OF FAMILIES IS INTEGRATED INTO OTHER CONTENT AREAS.

While CCR&Rs reflect a strong family focus in many of their services, findings suggest that this focus is not as prevalent in CCR&R provider training. Often, CCR&Rs lack an explicit consideration of family support and family involvement issues in their training. Instead, these topics tend to be addressed peripherally, during the course of training in other areas. Specifically, sustaining one's child care business and fostering children's development tend to be more explicit training goals of CCR&Rs.

How these training goals are achieved, however, can have important bearing on whether providers will be able to work in family-supportive ways, as working with families can be a component within these other training topics. Susan Jakob, former Assistant Director at Action for Children, describes a purposeful integration of family support into other training topics: "In every course, the philosophy of working with parents is present." The following findings illustrate this point.

Early childhood development training considers the role of families.
Not surprisingly, fostering the healthy development of young children is a central goal of early childhood care and education, and provider training reflects this priority. For example, food program training, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and frequently administered through CCR&Rs, trains family child care providers in child nutrition. Knowledge of childhood development issues, such as good nutrition, allows providers to work effectively with children, but it can also help them explain the developmentally appropriate nature of the child care curriculum and children's behavior to parents. Child development training can also help providers realize the influence of family life on children's growth, which in turn can motivate providers to learn more about children's home life from parents. While all child development training holds this potential, some training makes explicit the connection between child development and working with families. For example, in a training-to-go workshop on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome at Western and Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, providers learn how to help families keep their infants safe. The training reminds providers to discuss infants' sleep positions with parents.

Dolores Terrazas from El Comienzo explains that beyond safety and nutrition, a central child development goal of training is "children's well-being." She explains how her program addresses this goal: "We assist parents and providers in formulating the question "is my child developing in a way that I can see growth and participate in it and be a part of it with the provider?" Training at other agencies illustrates how providers can learn to help families support children's physical and psychological growth and well-being:

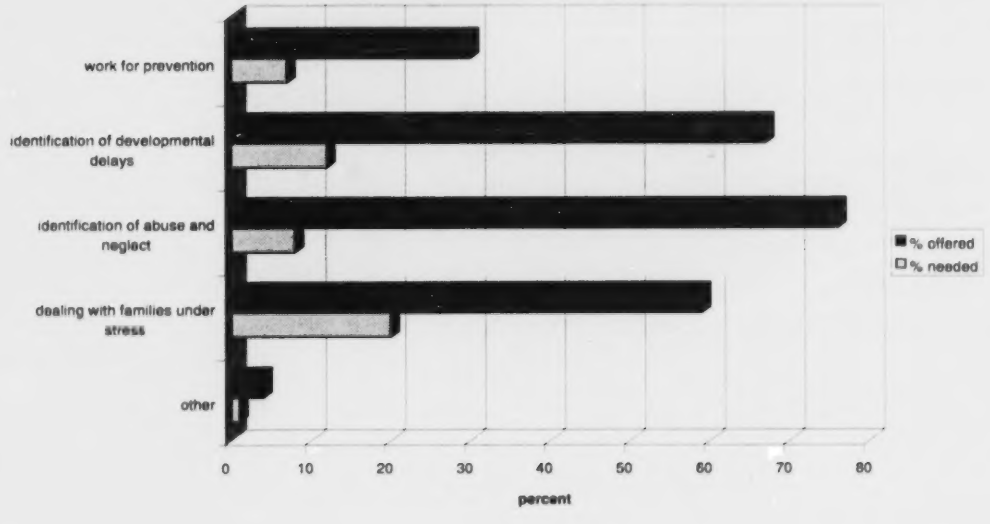
At Childcare Resources, the Parents and Caregivers Together (PACT) program trains providers to foster child development by working with families. Providers learn to conduct developmental and hearing screenings with children, and communicate those results with recommended referrals to parents.

At the Work and Family Resource Center, a mobile learning center called Ad-VAN-tage' delivers kits with toys, equipment, curriculum, and instruction to 63 family child care homes. The driver models the curriculum, inquires about any concerns, and distributes "tip sheets" to providers who in turn pass them on to parents.

A recruitment and training program at Child Care Resources of Waldo County offers infant/toddler training using the Far West Labs curriculum. Part of this curriculum addresses how providers can help parents anticipate and respond to developmental issues that children face. For example, providers learn how to help parents deal with the separation anxiety that some children experience in child care.

Another popular child development topic in training that has implications for working with families is prevention and intervention strategies. Results from our brief survey with 173 CCR&Rs revealed that working toward prevention — identifying and caring for children and families dealing with developmental delays, abuse and neglect, and other forms of stress — was an especially well-covered topic of training. Almost half of the agencies responding to our survey covered this topic in training, perhaps because funding for such training is more readily available. Within this training area, the topic of abuse and neglect was addressed through the most agencies, as Graph 1 shows:

Graph 1: Working toward Prevention: Training Offered and Needed



Learning to care for children with developmental delays and to work with their families are part of a 40-hour child development course at Childcare Resources. This course features visits by parents with special needs children, who address inclusion and their personal experiences raising children with special needs.

Providers learn to consider the influence of provider, community, and policies on families.

To work successfully with families, providers must learn to look beyond just the child or even the family to consider the influence that providers, child care settings, the local community, and policies have on families. Susan Jakob, former Assistant Director of Action for Children, describes the "interdependence" of many CCR&Rs that partner not only with families, but also with employers, neighborhoods, caregivers, and funding agents. In training, CCR&Rs convey the importance of interdependency by exposing providers to an ecological perspective of children and families — that families and child care are nested within communities and larger society.

Provider development training supports providers' work with families.

Providers' work with children and families improves when providers pay attention to their own personal and professional needs. Training can promote providers' own development by teaching them business skills or by contributing to their professional advancement, as well as by fostering their mental, physical, and family health. Dolores Terrazas explains the professional development of providers as both a dilemma and new direction for El Comienzo: "One of the difficulties that trainers face is letting providers know that they are empowered and have leadership abilities to guide their own professional growth. The question is not that they can't do it; the dilemma is how do you smoothly transition this information to a group of people that have historically not had this opportunity and decision-making and planning responsibilities for their own development." She suspects that the success of promoting leadership through training may rest in providers' "feeling secure and confident that what they are doing is helping themselves and their communities."

Training that supports providers' personal growth and well-being can also affect how they work with families. Learning how to manage stress and balance work and family life better can free up providers' energy and time to work more closely with families.

Managing stress through techniques such as yoga, is a popular topic among providers receiving "cluster" training through The Child Care Connection. In cluster training, a small group of registered providers gathers at one provider's house to receive training. A regular network of providers contacts the CCR&R to request specific topics.

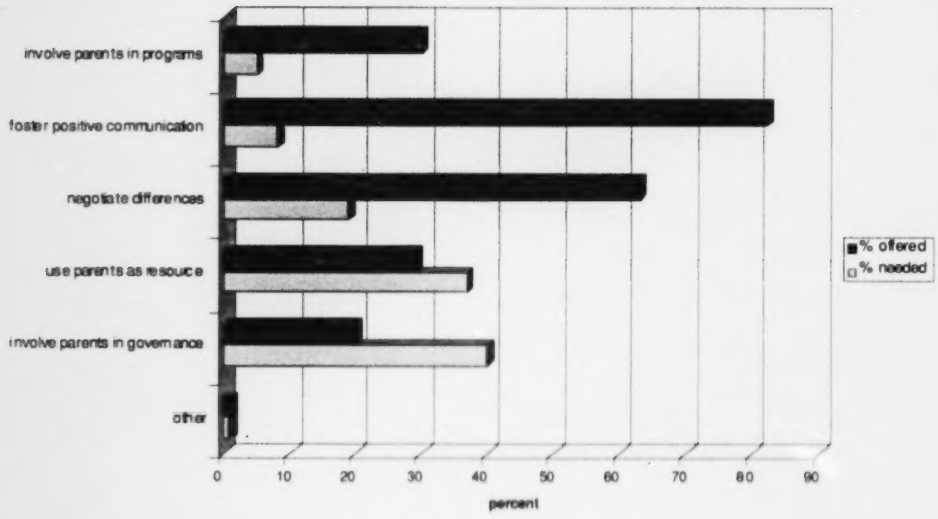
A publication by BANANAS titled *Parent and Child Together in Family Day Care — Will it Work for Me?* helps providers examine the pros and cons of having a family child care program that includes one's own children.

Organizational development training includes working with families.
Skills for developing and sustaining a successful business can also help providers become family-supportive. Training that addresses consumer education, for example, can foster a family focus at the organizational level. The following examples illustrate training that addresses dual goals of organizational development and parent/family development.

> Childcare Resources trains providers in purchase-of-service child care programs to improve their business by viewing parents and families as customers. Providers learn how to market the program, identify consumer satisfaction, conduct customer surveys, and otherwise determine how best to serve families.
>
> El Comienzo trains family child care providers to communicate with families about rules of business, such as a set child care price, safety issues, and timeliness. Dolores Terrazas explains: "There are issues of communicating how the business aspect serves the caregiving piece. For example, providers need to inform parents that their children will be safe and healthy because of services provided, but these services will have a set price. There are also communication difficulties with regard to rules and regulations — for example, informing a parent that he/she cannot come late because the child might feel abandoned. Such issues create anxiety between parents and providers and can lead to misunderstandings if they are not discussed early on in the relationship. However, providers know that they are in the business to provide a caring, nurturing service. Their number one goal is to make sure the child in their care is happy and that the parent feels content with this care."

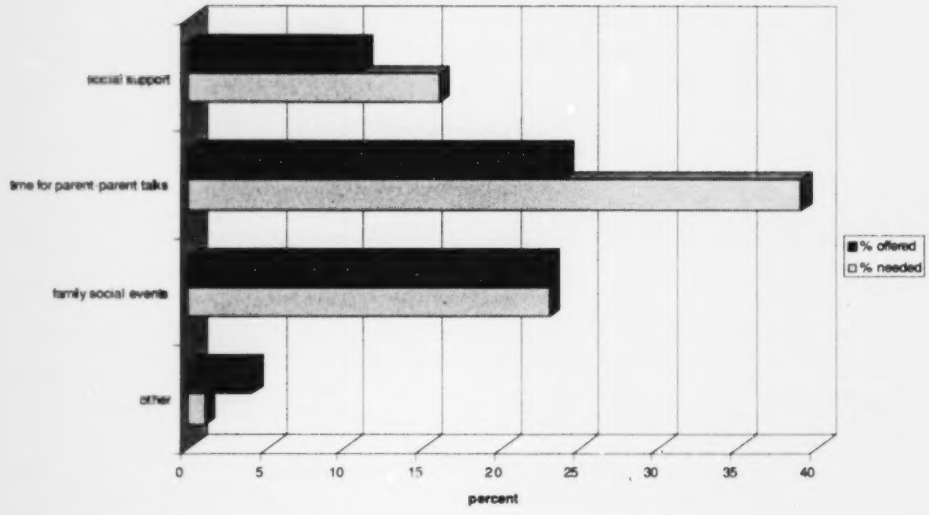
One way to support families through organizational policies is to include parents in child care governance. The CCR&R practitioners we spoke with, however, did not describe training examples in these areas. This finding is consistent with our survey results. Only 19 percent of CCR&Rs offer training on how to involve parents in governance of child care programs. Only 28 percent teach providers how to involve families as resources in child care programs, as Graph 2 shows:

Graph 2: Involving Parents in Programs: Training Offered and Needed



Another way to support families organizationally is to offer social activities for families. However, few agencies offer training in how to support families' social lives, such as through parent-to-parent interactions or social events for families with children in child care. Graph 3 details this training gap.

Graph 3: Social Support: Training Offered and Needed



Community development training helps providers support families.
Through training, providers can learn about the community and its importance to families. They can learn to collaborate with other individuals and agencies, provide community-specific services, and empower the community, thereby promoting both parent/family and community development. By knowing the local community, its needs and resources, providers can refer families to other services or work together to give families comprehensive services. Bobbie Weber of Family Connections explains how interdisciplinary training can lead to this set of provider knowledge and skills. Interdisciplinary training creates "a supportive learning environment for those who serve families to develop a shared understanding of, and skills for, family-focused, family-driven, and family-centered service delivery."

> Family Connections uses this interdisciplinary approach in several of its professional development efforts. A one-year certificate/two-year degree in Child and Family Studies for early childhood professionals is offered with the two four-year colleges in the geographic area. The first year of training combined students from the family studies program with students from other human service career programs. Also, a family-focused course titled Families in Focus: Innovative Service Strategies, brings together different professionals serving families to gain knowledge and skills for working effectively with and collaboratively for families. Providers are purposely recruited from a wide range of agencies so that the course can mirror cross-discipline and cross-agency work needed for a family-driven focus.
>
> At retreats and open forums sponsored by Action for Children, providers learn to collaborate on community initiatives that bring together professionals, parents, and community members. One open space meeting posed the following question to participants: "You have five million dollars to spend, but you're unable to provide quality child care to your community. What should you do?" Such questions draw on the expertise of all people involved. Also, a quality child care project titled "Right from the Start" has supported six model early childhood programs that operate in collaboration with another community agency, university or bureau, and were encouraged to make their work more visible to the community. The second phase of the program "is aimed at moving children up in the community agenda and helping child care providers collaborate with other groups," according to former Assistant Director Susan Jakob.

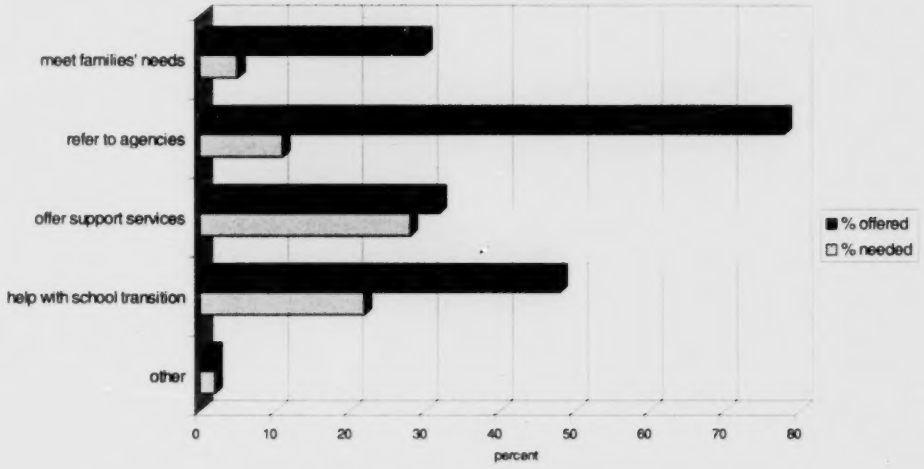
These experiences increase providers' awareness of community resources and put them in a better position to make referrals or work together with other agencies to meet families' needs. Tailoring training to meet specific family needs and involving the community early on help foster parent/family and community development:

> El Comienzo tailors training to address the needs of each community about issues relevant to local Latino families. For example in one community, training might include resources and classes about ESL, housing, immigration, and health. This focused training is possible because the project familiarizes itself with the community before training begins. "Talking to the community before the project begins is indispensable, not only to collect information but

to gain broader support and commitment from community partners," explains Dolores Terrazas.

Survey results also show that CCR&Rs train providers to link families and communities. Graph 4 shows that 76 percent of agencies train providers in how to make community referrals.

Graph 4: Meeting Families' Needs: Training Offered and Needed



Policy development training raises awareness of policies affecting families.
Some training teaches providers about family and child policies relevant to their work, such as welfare reform policies and changes in child care licensure requirements. Training that shows providers how they can influence policies and how they can support families affected economically by policy changes holds the potential for broad policy change and development. Jane Adams, former Program Coordinator of Child Care Resources of Waldo County, explains that this type of training helps providers "transform and improve the community in which they live, rather than abandon it."

BANANAS publishes a newsletter for parents and providers every other month. This newsletter often contains child care policy changes relevant to providers and families. A September-October 1996 newsletter contained a "Legislative Snip" on welfare reform. Another Snip discussed changes to California child care regulations and information about upcoming public hearings on the issue.

The New Jersey Sow the Seeds for Professional Growth program, a multi-constituency body that advises state policy, has child care providers on its board. This membership is an informal training experience for providers and clearly serves a goal of policy development.

Through Children's Council of San Francisco, providers support the efforts of teenage mothers affected by welfare reform. Providers offer child care to teen mothers enrolled in the CalLearn program. When funding was available, providers also received training specific to working with this population.

The KIDNET Web site, by the Florida Children's Forum, gives providers easy access to legislative updates and contact information for political representatives.

FINDING TWO: PARENT/FAMILY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOSTERS COMMUNICATION AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES WITH FAMILIES.

While much of training addressed families only peripherally, other training made parent/family development a main goal for provider learning. This family-centered training tended to emphasize culturally appropriate practice and parent-provider communication.

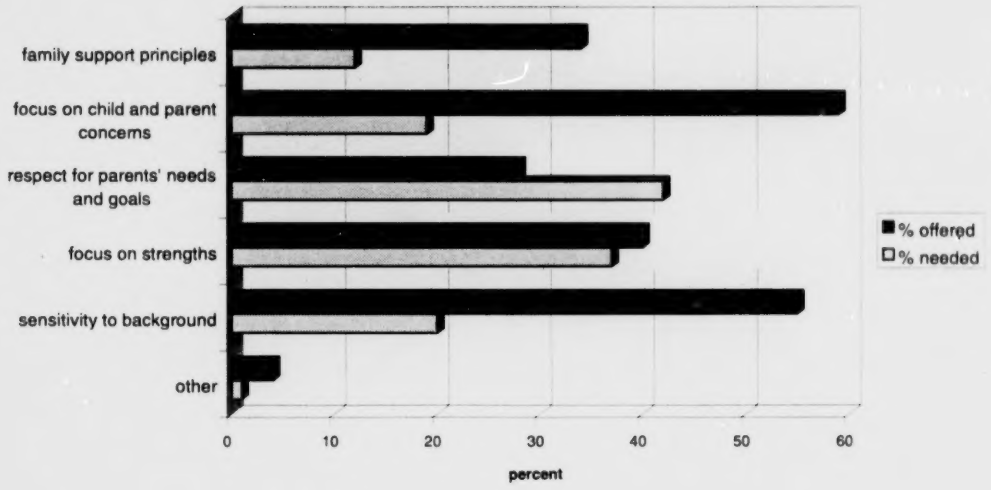
Working with families in culturally relevant ways.
A theme of appreciating different cultural approaches to childrearing arose among provider training offered through CCR&Rs. In the service and training framework (presented in Figure 2), this theme addresses the family knowledge subcategory of the parent/family development goal of training. El Comienzo exemplifies this theme well; Spanish-speaking family child care providers are trained to recognize different childrearing values and approaches among different cultural groups. Other training also considers family culture deeply:

Western Community Action and Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council offer Cultural Dynamics, a six-hour training program mandated for all child care providers in Minnesota. The training emphasizes appropriate child care for children of all cultural backgrounds and inclusiveness toward all children and parents. The curriculum is in the process of being revised to include an extensive examination of cultural issues. As Karen DeBoer explains, this revised curricula goes beyond "foods and holidays" in appreciating diversity; emphasized instead is an understanding of parents as operating from their own culturally informed value systems.

An experimental class at BANANAS addressed key issues in infant-toddler development and childrearing from a multicultural perspective. Part of the course broke down participants into small language groups of Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and English to discuss the cultural relevance of the material covered in the class.

Results from our national survey of CCR&Rs support this finding. Specifically, 54 percent of agencies reported that they offered training which reflects "sensitivity to family background." This was the second most frequently mentioned family support principle reflected in CCR&R provider training, as Graph 5 illustrates:

Graph 5: Family Support Principles: Training Offered and Needed



Communicating effectively with families.
An essential family-supportive skill for child care providers is communication. Perhaps this is why basic communication between parents and providers was a common theme among CCR&R provider training. Occasionally, training helped providers apply communication skills to specific and sometimes difficult situations with parents, such as discussion of discipline, mental health issues, or child care contracts.

> At the Children's Council of San Francisco, a mental health consultation program teaches providers to consider the family when dealing with children's mental health issues. Specific courses on topics such as communication with parents help accomplish this goal.
>
> The agency also runs joint workshops for providers and parents on critical topics such as discipline, encouraging dialogue, and allowing parent-provider partnerships to grow.

Training opportunities for learning more advanced communication skills with parents include:

- A workshop series that begins with basic communication skills, moves to assertiveness training, and then to advanced problem-solving (Work and Family Resource Center)
- A workshop that addresses how to minimize miscommu[illegible]cations with parents (BANANAS)
- Home visits by a CCR&R specialist to assist in advanced problem-solving between provider and parent when other interventions fail to repair a breakdown in communication (Action for Children)
- An assertiveness training program using interactive methods to teach empathy; perspective-taking; acknowledgement; and paraphrasing, clarifying, and restating what has being said (Work and Family Resource Center).

A high percentage (83%) of agency practitioners responding to our survey indicated that "fostering positive communication" between parents and providers is a topic of training offered through their agency. Survey results show that this topic is offered at more agencies than any other topic dealing with parent involvement in child care programs (See Graph 2, page 25).

GUIDING QUESTION THREE:

WHAT TRAINING APPROACHES DO CCR&Rs UTILIZE?

The content of CCR&R family services and provider training addresses a range of issues related to working with and supporting families. But the *ways* that these ideas are conveyed can also influence their potential to transform providers' practices. This section describes the varied and innovative approaches employed by CCR&Rs to train child care providers. Specifically, conversations with CCR&R practitioners revealed three interesting findings about the delivery of provider training.

FINDING ONE: CCR&Rs USE BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL MECHANISMS TO TRAIN AND SUPPORT PROVIDERS.

The research revealed that agencies not only facilitate provider learning through formal training opportunities such as workshops, courses, and conferences, but also through informal means — through chances to observe, work directly with families and communities, and interact with peers. Consequently, CCR&Rs challenged and expanded our definition of "training" to include both direct and indirect experiences that influence the values and practices of child care providers.

CCR&R practitioners described several creative and informal methods of delivering family-centered training to child care providers. These informal methods were as common as more formal methods. These informal and unconventional training mechanisms reflect a flexibility and resourcefulness among CCR&Rs in meeting the needs of their specific provider communities, much like the creative delivery of services to families. Informal ways that CCR&Rs support providers' learning and professional development are listed below:

- Decentralized and in-home training (Child Care Connection)
- Telephone assistance lines (Work and Family Resource Center)
- Resource centers (Childcare Resources)
- Materials — handouts, publications, newsletters (BANANAS)
- Web pages (Florida Children's Forum)
- Comprehensive directories of services for families (Florida Children's Forum)
- Referral to other training institutions (Metro-Dade Child Development Services)
- Support for grassroots child care professional organizations (Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc.)
- Peer mentor programs (Work and Family Resource Center).

FINDING TWO: TRAINING REFLECTS FIVE COMPONENTS BENEFICIAL TO A FAMILY FOCUS.

Five components of child care provider training that can strengthen its ability to convey family-supportive principles are reflected in the training practices of CCR&Rs. These effective approaches to training are systemic, comprehensive, continuous, inclusive, and reinforcing (Dunst, 1994). Table 2 defines these training components and offers illustrative examples from the CCR&Rs studied.

Table 2:
Delivery Components of Family-Centered Training

Component	Definition	Examples
Systemic	Providers gain credentials that in turn are linked to compensation and/or transfer to other career pathways	• Links with higher education • Programs for professional advancement • Standards and competencies for child care provision
Comprehensive	Providers learn about child and family development as well as topics related to management and child care policies affecting their work	• Training programs, workshops, and courses • Conferences • Innovative training delivery • Phone assistance • Resources and materials
Continuous	Providers advance from basic to more specialized knowledge of families (and in the process become mentors to others)	• Mentor programs • Helping providers become trainers and presenters • Advanced training opportunities • Food Program training • In-house certification
Inclusive	Opportunities for joint training of parents and providers enable greater communication and trust building between them	• Training parents and providers together • Parents and providers as decision-makers together • Shared resources
Reinforcing	Providers form networks of support to engage in continuous learning from their peers.	• Cluster group training • Decentralized training programs • Grassroots child care provider associations

Providers gain credentials that promote their careers.
Systemic training enables providers to gain credentials that are in turn linked to compensation or that transfer to other career paths. This type of training is particularly necessary for the majority of child care providers who work long hours, with relatively low pay, often without recognition for the importance of their work (Morgan, 1997). Systemic training is critical to supporting family-centered practice, because it offers professional incentives which encourage child care providers to pursue additional training, including that which addresses working with families. Interviews with CCR&R practitioners reveal that systemic training occurs through collaborations with local colleges, established programs for professional advancement, and development of or support for child care standards and competencies.

> A training program at Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc. offers individual mentors and group training to center-based providers. Only centers that agree to promote the providers participating in the program from assistant teacher to lead teacher, with an accompanying salary enhancement, can be part of the program. At the close of the program, providers are promoted within their centers.

Providers learn a range of needed skills.
Comprehensive training is important because child care providers have multiple and overlapping training needs. CCR&R training topics are as varied as the needs of the providers they serve, including issues such as child development, child health issues, parent-provider communication, curricula, and child care provider business skills. CCR&R conferences often address an array of training topics:

> Tutti Sherlock of Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc. explains "our conferences provide workshop choices appropriate for providers caring for all age groups and for new or veteran providers." Conferences and other training at the agency cover a range of basic and advanced child care topics. Training offered to more advanced providers addresses issues such as professionalism, parent-child advocacy, and advanced parent-provider communication.

> El Comienzo sponsors a leadership-mentoring institute that addresses a comprehensive set of core issues relevant to child care leadership with Spanish speaking families, such as cross cultural communication, conflict resolution, public policy, team building, developing support networks, and direct program impacts.

Providers can advance from basic to specialized training.
Continuous family-centered training through CCR&Rs offers providers the opportunity to advance from basic to more specialized skills. Because providers have increased experiences with families over time, training can improve and build on providers' relationships with families. This kind of training offers opportunities to providers to become peer mentors, trainers, or presenters of family-centered material, thus encouraging a "natural" network of professional support in which providers turn to each other for concerns in working with families. In-house certification also serves as a source of continuous training for providers working to meet delineated child care standards.

A mentor program at Work and Family Resource Center pairs child care providers with mentors who are matched on the basis of training needs and areas of expertise. Mentors must have recommendations from peers and family, as well as at least two years of child care experience. Beth Pfalmer, Director, notes that mentorships are one-on-one and situation specific. New providers who have not been trained in family-supportive practices can learn practices that reflect the family-centered values of the CCR&R.

Action for Children offers a process of in-house family child care certification. An agency representative visits each provider and screens his or her home. Homes and personal backgrounds are evaluated and assigned a rating on a tiered system. The lowest tier indicates that a provider has met minimum safety requirements, while the highest tier indicates that the provider has met basic requirements, in addition to having 18 months of ongoing training and good references.

Providers and families learn together.
Inclusive training brings parents and providers together to participate in learning. This type of training fosters greater communication, builds trust, and bespeaks joint investment. Such training both facilitates and models family-centered practice. Inclusive training occurs through materials and committee work as often as it does through more formal avenues of training. For example, pamphlets, in-house videos, newsletters, and resources packets are often developed for both providers and parents and address joint concerns and goals, such as collaboration, communication, and child discipline. Planning committees, advisory boards, open meetings, and focus groups offer other opportunities for parents and providers to meet and learn from one another.

Action for Children held a retreat with school personnel, parents, and community members to find out what families needed and to develop shared goals. Focus groups revealed a desire to return child care to neighborhood communities. CCR&R staff had not anticipated this goal and therefore redirected efforts to serve the community better.

Providers learn from one another.
Reinforcing training occurs when providers form networks of support to engage in continuous learning from peers. This creates a context of shared experiences, mutual learning, and belonging. Such training is especially important for family child care providers who often work in isolation; such peer support attenuates stress (Hurd, Mitchell, Wyche, & Jacob, 1996). Jane Adams, former Program Coordinator of Child Care Resources of Waldo County remarks, "It's really clear that providers learn better from each other." Her agency encourages informal links between providers as a way of channeling the energy and skills of seasoned providers who have worked with children and families for many years.

CCR&Rs facilitate peer guidance through cluster group training and decentralized training in providers' homes; specialized support groups of providers who have common areas of concern, such as managing voucher payments; support to local child care provider associations; and

financial and in-kind assistance to groups of experienced providers who act as informal mentors to new providers.

In rural Minnesota, providers have difficulty attending workshops because they live far away from the closest CCR&R. A "Training-to-Go" series of workshops responds creatively to this obstacle. A CCR&R staff member delivers the workshop curriculum to a group of providers who gather at a home or local building. Tutti Sherlock, from an urban/suburban area of Minnesota, notes that groups often form and contact her agency requesting specific types of training. A long list of available workshops reflect the important issues that providers can address through discussion and mutual support. Parent-provider partnerships are also featured in each workshop.

Western Community Action has utilized informal networks of providers for specialized mentor support systems. According to the director, Gail Goltz, such a network is now in place for providers who care for special needs children and their families. They hope to recruit providers for a similarly structured network on infant care, in the near future.

FINDING THREE: CCR&Rs ADDRESS COMMON CHALLENGES TO TRAINING PROVISION.

Finally, CCR&R practitioners mentioned challenges common to the provision of training that must be considered in any attempt to improve the child care training system. CCR&Rs approach these challenges creatively, as Table 3 summarizes.

Table 3:
CCR&R Training Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Motivating overwhelmed and underpaid child care providers to attend trainings	• Assess providers' training needs and desires • Contract with centers to allow time off and promotion • Arrange articulation with colleges for course credits • Evaluate effectiveness of current training
Reaching isolated or rural providers	• Offer 'cluster' training at one provider's home where several providers can gather • Provide distance education (e.g. videos, internet training, and technical support) • Offer warmlines
Training providers to handle conflict and sensitive issues with parents	• Hold joint workshops with parents and providers to hear each others' perspective • Videotape parent and provider focus groups on a particular topic • Train parents to lead or co-lead workshops
Addressing cultural, linguistic, and economic aspects of training	• Deliver training in providers' native languages • Hire trainers that represent the cultural and economic diversity of providers receiving training and of child care population • Develop culturally relevant training curriculum to meet the needs of specific community
Meeting experienced providers' training needs with families	• Support child care associations and other peer networking • Establish mentoring programs that draw on advanced providers' expertise with families • Create a training series, from basic to advanced levels (e.g., communication)
Operating with limited availability of funding for training	• Solicit funds or in-kind services from local businesses and utilize community volunteers • Open trainings offered through special funds to general provider population • Refer providers to additional training in the community • Share overhead expenses (e.g., building) with other agencies or community colleges

GUIDING QUESTION FOUR:

WHAT LESSONS DO CCR&Rs OFFER FOR MAKING CHILD CARE MORE FAMILY-CENTERED?

Examining CCR&R services, family-centered training content, and innovations in training delivery offers several lessons for creating stronger links between the family expertise of CCR&Rs and their creative ways of supporting the professional development of child care providers. This section highlights just a few.

LESSON ONE: MAKE WORKING WITH FAMILIES A FOCAL POINT OF TRAINING.

Beth Pfalmer, Director of Work and Family Resource Center, explains that a "hidden" agenda in all provider training is to help nurture family-centered care. While this integrated or hidden intent is laudable, training efforts that make families the center of curricula are less common than those that attend to families in only general or peripheral ways.

Innovative training at CCR&Rs will benefit from a more *explicit* focus on families — a strengthening of the parent/family goal of training. The stronger articulation of a family-supportive philosophy in provider training efforts would mirror the way in which that philosophy is already presented in the services that CCR&Rs provide to families. A good example of how this is already happening throughout CCR&Rs is in available workshops and courses that specifically address parent-provider communication.

LESSON TWO: EDUCATE PROVIDERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS TOGETHER ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN.

Training that brings child care professionals together with parents and families models partnerships and fosters conversations and relationships. This training can cover topics such as child discipline or family stress, or explicitly focus on the parent-provider relationship. CCR&Rs are uniquely suited for this inclusive training because they serve both parents and providers. Inclusive training is ideal for strengthening parent-provider relationships; a mutual investment in child care is increased, and each participant becomes an "expert." Provider training that utilizes parent and community panels or presenters can achieve a similar goal, as can publications that explicitly address a joint audience. In a comprehensive report on how CCR&Rs can support families, NACCRRA suggests bringing parent panels to provider trainings to discuss their family concerns (Anderson, 1996).

LESSON THREE: COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OTHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.

As two primary sources of training for child care professionals, community colleges and CCR&Rs hold promise for furthering training opportunities for providers. Particularly in the field of child care, which has a historically fragmented training system, training that is cohesive

and coordinated across institutions is critical. Complimentary and collaborative training in these two central training institutions can shift child care training and practice from a child to a family focus.

Nearly all CCR&Rs profiled in our interview study referred child care providers to local community colleges for additional training not offered directly through CCR&Rs. Additionally, these CCR&Rs often keep extensive libraries with written and video materials as a source of informal training and support for child care providers. Collaboration and an exchange of such resources could increase the family-centered training available to providers in several ways.

First, collaborations between community colleges and CCR&Rs can reduce the financial and time constraints that can prevent child care providers from seeking training.

Second, through their expertise and focused curriculum, community colleges may hold the potential to offer courses that directly address family support and involvement, increasing the number of training opportunities that focus explicitly on working with families. Likewise, colleges prepare professionals in a variety of related fields and are an ideal place to practice interdisciplinary training, which can prepare child care providers and other professionals to collaborate on behalf of families.

Third, collaborations can increase incentives for provider training by awarding college credits for short-term CCR&R training courses, including courses with a family focus.

LESSON FOUR: RECRUIT AND TRAIN PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

Provider recruitment and training efforts are closely linked. By recruiting parents and community members to become providers, and by supporting these new recruits through training, CCR&Rs merge their family-centered philosophy and services with an innovative approach to professional development. This merging meets at least three important social needs: 1) employment opportunities for parents and other family and community members, 2) an increase in the quantity and quality of child care provision, and 3) the strengthening of a family, community, and cultural perspective in child care among new providers. In other words, this strategy strives toward multiple training goals of parent/family development, community development, and provider development. For example, agencies featured in this report recruited and trained parents, grandparents, and other community members to participate in the early childhood education field as parent educators, telephone support line volunteers, and family child care providers.

LESSON FIVE: INVOLVE PROVIDERS IN POLICY-MAKING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT RELATE TO FAMILIES.

Innovative programs that bring child care professionals together with other community members and planning agencies to consider and shape child care policies, provide critical lessons for local and state policy makers. This strategy serves the goals of community and policy development, and the goal of parent/family development as well.

Clearly, when providers are afforded appropriate access to policy making, they participate, and they hold the potential for reshaping policies to benefit families. Some CCR&Rs also have redefined child care as a community activity by expanding the roles of providers, families, and community as previous sections detail.

LESSON SIX: FOSTER A NATIONAL AWARENESS OF AND DISCUSSION ABOUT FAMILY-CENTERED CHILD CARE.

National child care organizations, policymakers, and early childhood training institutions can make family-centered child care a priority. NACCRRA offers several ideas for increasing awareness of family-centered child care. A successful "doll campaign" in 1995, now replicated by governors in several states, invited thousands of parents to decorate dolls representing their children and their stories. NACCRRA also contributed to the national conversation in 1996 with its comprehensive report, *Supporting Families in Changing Times: Child Care Resource and Referral Looks to the Future*.

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The unique training approaches of CCR&Rs offer lessons for the entire field of professional development of early childhood educators. The philosophies and practices of CCR&Rs attest to their commitment to serving families with sensitivity and innovation. In training, CCR&Rs integrate a family-centered perspective into traditional training efforts. In addition, there are innovations in methods used to deliver training, and in content of training efforts. There are also some innovative programs that place providers at the nexus of community collaborations, which influence policies. While the family focus of CCR&R training is promising, it is also uneven. The above lessons offer suggestions for moving the family-supportive expertise of CCR&R services and philosophies even more fully into their provision of training.

AGENCY PROFILES

The following profiles show how services to families and family-centered provider training are combined and nested in individual CCR&Rs and CCR&R networks. The detailed, context-specific examples of training illustrated in these profiles are starting points for conversations across CCR&Rs in their efforts to develop a stronger family focus.

FEATURED PROFILES

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1. Childcare Resources (Birmingham, Alabama)

2. California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (San Francisco, California)

    - El Comienzo: The California Child Care Initiative Project (San Francisco, California)
    - BANANAS, Inc. (Oakland, California)
    - Children's Council of San Francisco (San Francisco, California)

3. Work and Family Resource Center (Denver, Colorado)

4. Florida Children's Forum (Tallahassee, Florida)

    - Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend (Tallahassee, Florida)
    - Metro-Dade Child Development Services (Miami, Florida)

5. Child Care Resources of Waldo County (Belfast, Maine)

6. Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc. (Rochester, Minnesota)

7. Western Community Action, Inc. (Marshall, Minnesota) and Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, inc. (Worthington, Minnesota)

8. The Child Care Connection (Trenton, New Jersey)

9. Action for Children (Columbus, Ohio)

10. Family Connections (Albany, Oregon)

**Profiles were prepared by Tracey L. Hurd, Holly M. Kreider, and Maura M. Pelham*

Childcare Resources
Birmingham, Alabama

Agency Contact	Margaret Curry, Executive Director Barbara Scott, Program Services Director
Location	1904 First Avenue North Birmingham, AL 35203-4006 Phone: (205) 252-1991 Fax: (205) 252-1991
Year Agency Began	1984
Region	Over 8,500 children from low-income families in Jefferson, Shelby, Walker, and Blount counties
Number of Staff Members	50
1996 Budget	Childcare Resources operates with a $12 million budget, approximately $10.5 million of which is direct child care payments for state and federal subsidized child care.
Primary Funding Sources	Most funding comes from the Alabama Department of Human Resources and United Way of Central Alabama.

Points of Distinction

1. Management of federal and state child care subsidies to local communities and a United Way-funded subsidy program for families who do not meet federal or state income requirements, provide a range of low-income families with valuable child care services.
2. Training to providers in purchase-of-service child care programs helps improve their business by helping them view parents and families as customers. Providers learn how to market the program, identify consumer satisfaction, conduct customer surveys, and otherwise determine how best to serve families.
3. The Parents as Teachers (PAT) program is a home/child care center program designed to give children the best possible start, using the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Through PAT, parents acquire skills to help make the most of these crucial early learning years. The goals of the project are to enable caregivers to provide PAT services to families enrolled in the child care program as well as to improve the quality of child care utilizing brain development research and implications for child care.

Agency Overview

Childcare Resources just celebrated its thirteenth anniversary. It is one of the first agencies to manage state and federal subsidized child care funding in local communities. Two agency divisions — Family Services and Program Services — offer substantial support and involvement to families and/or train child care providers to work effectively with families. The agency's mission statement reflects its commitment to all those involved in the care and education of young children: "Childcare Resources promotes quality child care and education of children by providing information, education, and assistance to parents, employers, providers, and the community."

How does the agency serve families?
Childcare Resources offers resource and referral services by helping families assess their child care needs and quality child care options, and by informing them of child care regulations. Enhanced resource and referral services are offered to corporate employees through personal, customized counseling, assistance, and follow-up.

Also, Childcare Resources is widely known for managing a child care financial assistance program funded by state and federal money. The agency determines parent eligibility, provides counseling about child care, and makes payments to child care providers. With United Way and city and county funds, a second financial assistance program helps parents who do not qualify for state or federal assistance pay for child care.

Finally, Childcare Resources maintains comprehensive child care data, conducts child care research, and assists families with miscellaneous needs, such as voter registration.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
Formal training offered through Childcare Resources is extensive and generally free or affordable. Training topics such as curriculum, child development, developmentally appropriate practice, and identifying abuse and neglect commonly have a family involvement or family support component. Professional resources, such as a lending library with an entire section devoted to parenting issues, also abound. In addition, training is available to child care centers with purchase-of-service contracts, teaching providers how to market their program, identify consumer satisfaction, conduct customer surveys, and otherwise determine what is it that parents with children in their programs really want.

An on-site laboratory
Celebrations — the name of a state of the art classroom at the agency — provides a training opportunity for local child care providers. Child care centers identify their specific training needs, then visit Celebrations three times. During these visits, Celebrations classroom teachers gear activities toward the specific training issues identified. Then trainers make two visits to the outside center to adapt what has been learned to the specific site. Recently, a research group affiliated with a local university suggested a new direction for Celebrations — bringing parents and families to the laboratory school to observe and learn about quality child care. This suggestion is under consideration.

Parents as Teachers
Childcare Resources has received funding for its PAT program, now in its fifth year. PAT training will be offered in four child care centers, offering provider training, parent education, and parent-provider communication, all via a Parent Educator, hired by Childcare Resources. Providers will be invited to monthly provider meetings and individual meetings between parents and the Parent Educator and will be given other opportunities to observe positive parent-provider interactions modeled by the Parent Educator.

The plan for instituting the PAT program in four child care centers will be implemented over a three-year period. The first year will take the Parent Educator into each center to provide services such as parent group meetings; personal visits with parents; observations of children in classrooms; developmental, hearing, and vision screenings of children; and referrals to community services to the parents and teachers/directors of the child care centers.

An agency collaboration with local businesses and colleges
Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) is a collaboration of the Birmingham Regional Planning Group (a business and government group), Auburn University, Jefferson State Community College, and Childcare Resources. To improve downtown Birmingham for workers and increase child care services, QEP has funded a state of the art early childhood learning center to serve 217 children. An upstairs facility at the center serves as a dormitory for Auburn University students participating in internships. QEP also includes the implementation of a career lattice for child care providers, which takes into account different training experiences that meet CEU standards and lays out training objectives that vary by level and topic, moving from breadth to depth and specificity of training. Finally, parents and community members are also involved in this effort to create and sustain high quality child care.

A public service collaboration
In the Ready to Learn initiative, Childcare Resources is collaborating with the Junior League and Alabama Public Television, training providers to utilize public television and communicate with parents about how to access and utilize public television themselves. A bookstore in a local mall is co-sponsoring an upcoming area Ready to Learn event, inviting a children's author and arranging tables with information for parents.

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
San Francisco, California

Agency Contact	Patty Siegel, Director
Location	111 New Montgomery Street, 7th floor San Francisco, CA 94105 Phone: (415) 882-0234 Fax: (415) 882-6233
Year Agency Began	1980
Region	The network is located in San Francisco, but its constituent CCR&Rs exist in every California county.
Number of Staff Members	25
1996 Budget	$2.4 million
Primary Funding Sources	State funds are supplemented by support from businesses and local governments.

Points of Distinction

1. The agency oversees a parent empowerment project implemented through individual CCR&Rs, which organizes parents who can then identify and act on child care issues of concern to them.
2. Trustline is a resource to parents considering in-home child care through unlicensed child care providers. Parents can see if the provider has a state criminal record or any substantiated child abuse complaints.
3. A project aimed at increasing quality child care in Latino communities trains Spanish-speaking family child care providers throughout California and in other states, emphasizing the importance of family, community, and culture in their work.

Network Overview

The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network is the oldest statewide network of its kind, helping parents find child care and other services. The network achieves this goal by sponsoring or supporting several programs and initiatives, including a parent organizing effort, a provider recruitment and training initiative, research and data collection on the cost and supply of child care in California, and a parent resource for checking unlicensed child care providers' backgrounds.

How does the network serve families?

The network serves and empowers families in a variety of ways. Innovative programs for families that the network supports are The Parent Voices Project, Trustline, and a community outposting project.

A parent empowerment project

The Parent Voices Project, sponsored by the Network, aims to bring back the parent voice to the child care movement. Individual CCR&Rs, such as the Children's Council of San Francisco and BANANAS, implement the project in their areas. With help from BANANAS, for example,

local parents have been holding house meetings in which local issues have been identified, such as AFDC child care reimbursement difficulties and traffic safety concerns around child care centers and homes.

Background checks on unlicensed providers
Several years ago; the Network sponsored legislation for a project called Trustline, which allows parents to check the background of unlicensed child care providers. Parents can find out if a provider has a state criminal record or substantiated child abuse complaints. As part of the program, families wishing to receive subsidies for child care through an unlicensed provider (such as a relative), must now have that provider's background checked, or "trustlined."

Community outposting
A recent grant from the California Endowment will fund the development of a pilot community outposting program. CCR&Rs in different regions of the state will pilot the program, which involves the placement of staffed kiosks in central community locations. Kiosks in supermarkets, laundromats, and other locations in which families conduct the business of their daily lives will help welcome, invite, and inform parents about child care and other resources. Participating CCR&Rs will develop relationships with local community agencies to provide needed information to families.

Research and data collection
The California Child Care Portfolio is a publication that offers a county-by-county description of the cost and supply of home and center-based child care in California. Individual CCR&Rs collected information within their region and the Network compiled it. According to Network staff, the publication has been well received, raising a statewide awareness of the high cost of child care and helping the state prepare for the impact of welfare reform. Specifically, the current supply of child care in regions most affected by welfare changes can be compared with anticipated child care needs.

How does the network train providers to work with families?
The network is involved in several large training efforts, including the Bay Area Infant/Toddler Consortium and the California Child Care Initiative Project.

Network staff comment that the shift to a family focus among national groups like the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and NACCRRA supports its own efforts toward family-centered service and training. Specifically, CDF has a campaign in which children in child care across the country are asked to draw a picture of their families, as a demonstration of how child care benefits the whole family. NACCRRA is collecting family profiles in different regions that can illustrate key points, such as how child care affects different families financially.

Training providers to work with infants and toddlers
The Network is the fiscal agent for the Bay Area Infant/Toddler Consortium. Individual CCR&Rs, BANANAS, and the San Francisco Children's Council are also involved in a consortium which trains providers to work with infants and toddlers ages zero to three (See individual profiles below).

Large-scale recruitment and training initiative
The goal of the California Child Care Initiative Project, a coalition among businesses, government, and local agencies, is to increase the supply of quality child care through recruitment and training. The El Comienzo project within this initiative recruits and trains Spanish-speaking family child care providers and maintains a clear family focus (See profile below).

Exemplary Project within the
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network:

El Comienzo
The California Child Care Initiative Project

Project Contact	Dolores G. Terrazas, Program Manager
Location	111 New Montgomery Street, 7th floor San Francisco, CA 94105 Phone: (415) 882-0234 FAX: (415) 882-6233
Year Program Began	1992
Region	Communities in California (and now expanding across the United States) representing various Latino ethnicities, including a large number of Mexican immigrants.
Number of Staff Members	3
1996 Budget	$250,000
Primary Funding Sources	State, business and local government fund the project's umbrella network—The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Private funds from The Charles Stewart Mott and Ford Foundations help support special efforts such as the Leadership Institute.

Points of Distinction

1. The project's focus on recruiting and training Spanish-speaking parents in the Latino community to become family child care providers helps create jobs and culturally relevant child care in the community.
2. Training is specific to community needs, so that providers learn about issues relevant to local Latino families; training might focus on resources related to ESL classes, housing, immigration, and health.
3. Providers learn to build on families' strengths by participating in joint parent-provider discussions, collaborative decision-making, and child advocacy, and by learning about different childrearing values and approaches.

Project Overview

El Comienzo is a project of the California Child Care Initiative Project, coordinated by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The initiative is a coalition that brings together businesses, governments, and local agencies to address the shortage of licensed, quality child care focusing on the Spanish-speaking community. Each participating community, through its local CCR&R, can tailor guidelines and priorities for its target areas. The Network offers technical support and financial grants to its sites in California to ensure collective success. Over 23,600 child care providers in the Initiative have received training. The El Comienzo project has trained over 2,000 individuals.

As part of the initiative, El Comienzo helps serve the child care needs of Latino parents and providers through CCR&Rs in California, with recent expansion to other states. Specifically, the project recruits and trains Spanish-speaking family child care providers. Program Manager Dolores Terrazas explains how the project meets "the challenge of creating public value that supports diversity and enables people to function productively within a system promoting equity."

How does the project serve families?
El Comienzo serves families in several ways. By recruiting and training parents in the Latino community to become family child care providers, the project supports the employment efforts of Spanish-speaking Latino parents. Also, the training project aims to provide Latino families with culturally appropriate quality child care.

How does the project train providers to work with families?
Staff on the El Comienzo project recruit and train Spanish-speaking family child care providers through various mechanisms. Training is holistic and community-based; the project invites community groups to join together in training. Training also follows a standard format that addresses background information, goal setting, and hands-on activities for learning. After orientation to the child care system, new providers receive training on a range of child care issues, such as parent-provider communication and understanding client needs, nontraditional hours, business contracts, child development and nutrition, and so forth. Many communities have expanded training to include classes that deal with topics such as ESL, housing, immigration, and health issues.

In addition to classes, project staff produce training manuals, resource guides, outreach brochures, and a twice-annual newsletter. In each of its training efforts, the project supports parents and providers. As Dolores Terrazas explains, "We need to look at the assets of parents and work on their strengths." The project assists in joint parent-provider discussions, collaborative decision-making, child advocacy, recognizing different childrearing values and approaches, and communicating rules of business such as a set child care price, safety issues, and timeliness.

A leadership institute
As an outgrowth of this program, the project held a regional leadership-mentoring institute in 1997, in Los Angeles, focusing on building skills and retaining bilingual and bicultural staff in the resource and referral field. Two additional leadership institutes scheduled for 1998 will be held on the East Coast. The seminars address core issues such as cross cultural communication, conflict resolution, public policy, team building, developing support networks, and direct program impacts. Approximately twenty participants will be selected for each seminar.

A train-the-trainer approach

In keeping with its name, El Comienzo (the beginning) uses a train-the-trainer approach to begin the training process. Lead staff at sites are trained to replicate a five-part model of recruitment and training. Project steps include assessing the supply and demand, recruiting individuals, and training to deliver quality child care, technical assistance for licensing, and ongoing support to providers. Recognizing the value of having providers come from the same community as the families they serve, the project requires that all involved site staff be bilingual and bicultural.

Exemplary Individual Resource and Referral Agency within the
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network:

BANANAS, Inc.
Oakland, California

Agency Contact	Arlyce Currie, Program Director
Location	5232 Claremont Avenue Oakland, CA 94618 Phone: (510) 658-0381 Fax: (510) 658-8354
Year Agency Began	1973
Region	The agency serves Northern Alameda County, a linguistically, economically, and racially diverse urban area which includes the cities of Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Albany, Oakland, and Piedmont.
Number of Staff Members	25
1996 Budget	$3.2 million
Primary Funding Sources	The agency receives funds from a variety of sources, including the California Department of Education, the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the Federal Health and Human Service Agency, and many private foundations, such as the United Way, Work/Family Directions, and the Jenifer Altman Foundation.

Points of Distinction

1. A wide variety of publications and workshops designed for parents address a range of topics that reflect parents' concerns and requests, such as working and breastfeeding, first aid for infants, multiracial childrearing, and wills for parents.
2. A variety of workshops for providers address partnerships with parents. For example, important areas of communication between providers and parents, such as parent contracting and minimizing miscommunications, are topics addressed in workshops.
3. On-site training is offered to teach providers to work with children who have special needs and their families.

Agency Overview

Program Director Arlyce Currie summarizes BANANAS' philosophy: "We're here first for parents." The agency conveys its family-centered philosophy in its hiring practices, its child care provider training, and its agency culture. The 25-member staff has been hired based on experience as parents or child care providers and/or on expertise in a language or particular area of child care. Serving the diverse urban region of Northern Alameda County, BANANAS' workforce can empathize with a range of parents and providers.

How does the agency serve families?
Foremost, the agency empowers and supports parents, as this newsletter description attests: "BANANAS' goal is to assist parents in finding the widest range of available child care situations and to encourage parents to act on their own knowledge and feelings as they select among these possibilities." One way that the agency empowers parents is through its participation in the Parent Voices Project, a project of the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (See details in the Network's profile). The agency also offers a variety of workshops for parents that address their specific concerns and requests. Workshops for parents with infants and toddlers, for example, have addressed babies' sleep patterns, first aid, and emergency care, and breastfeeding and working.

In addition, the agency offers a telephone helpline for parents and providers, a newsletter every other month, and numerous publications. Informational handouts and publications attempt to answer parents' frequently asked questions, such as how to choose child care in family day care or center-based settings; find care for infants, school-age, and special needs children; create written child care agreements that protect families and providers; and employ limited-English-speaking caregivers.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?

Workshops and classes
BANANAS offers workshops and classes for both new and experienced family child care providers that cover family-related topics such as setting up one's business and space, minimizing parent miscommunication, establishing parent contracts, and developing curriculum. Instructors for these courses are always former or current providers themselves.

On-site training
BANANAS also offers on-site training at child care centers that is hands-on and interactive and often deals with issues of inclusion. Some of the most dramatic successes of the agency have involved helping children with special needs to be included in quality child care programs. As Program Director Arlyce Currie notes, "It is especially hard for parents of children with special needs to find quality child care. When a good match is made, everyone breathes a big sigh of relief."

An experimental class
A recent experimental class addressed key issues in infant-toddler development and childrearing from a multicultural perspective. Part of the course broke down participants into small language groups of Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and English to discuss the cultural relevance of the material being taught.

Publications

BANANAS has developed a number of child care publications for sale to parents and child care providers. In addition, an array of child care handouts is available free to parents and child care providers in BANANAS' service area and at a nominal cost to out-of-area residents. Finally, BANANAS publishes a newsletter every other month for parents and child care providers addressing recent policy issues, family support and child care programs, parenting education workshops, and other relevant child care topics.

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Exemplary Individual Resource and Referral Agency within the
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network:

Children's Council of San Francisco
San Francisco, California

Agency Contact	Linnea Klee, Executive Director Jan McMillan, Program Director
Location	1 Second Street, 4th Floor San Francisco, CA 94103 Phone: (415) 243-0700 Fax: (415) 243-4414
Year Agency Began	1973
Region	The agency serves San Francisco City and county, with a client population that is urban and diverse in terms of culture, language, sexual orientation, and economic level.
Number of Staff Members	45 employees in three offices in different parts of the city. Staff will increase by 25-30 in 1998.
1996 Budget	$7.2 million
Primary Funding Sources	State and city funds, California Department of Education, Department of Social Service contracts, funds for nutrition, and resource and referral funds are all part of the budget. Administers $4.5 million of the federal, state, and local child care subsidies. This budget will grow to $13 million in 1998.

Points of Distinction

1. The agency's provision of direct services to families considers the composition of the local community. For example, the agency serves the needs of local teenage mothers in the CalLearn Program by providing child care while they attend school to meet Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) requirements. Other prominent community characteristics, such as the linguistic and sexual orientation diversity in San Francisco, are always considered in the provision of services.
2. A mental health consultation program supports providers when dealing with children's mental health issues.
3. Joint workshops for providers and parents on critical topics. such as discipline, encourage dialogue and allow parent-provider partnerships to grow.

Agency Overview

This large, urban resource and referral agency serves families within San Francisco City and county. The agency's mission is "to support, empower, and advocate for children, families, and child care providers through education, information, and child care services."

How does the agency serve families?
The Children's Council of San Francisco offers family services that match the needs of its community. For example, the agency offers bilingual and bicultural services as much as possible to serve the needs of families better. Also, the newsletter is written in two languages, and several counselors are bilingual. Issues of sexual orientation, ethnicity, and economic class are always considered in the provision of services and training. Additionally, the agency is involved in The Parent Voices Project, a parent organizing and empowering project supported by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (See details in Network profile).

Through involvement in the CalLearn Program, the agency helps provide child care for teenage mothers required to attend school in order to receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children. One counselor serves the program, helping between 80 and 90 teens select quality child care. Although funds are not available to train child care providers in how to work with these young parents, the program counselor tries to make site visits to child care settings to provide some technical assistance.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
Because of multiple programs and funding sources, the agency is able to offer providers an array of training opportunities otherwise unavailable. Training on specialized child development, family child care start up, and infant/toddler caregiving all deal with issues of family support and involvement, but no course is devoted solely to the topic. However, as much as possible, the agency invites both parents and providers to training workshops to encourage a dialogue between them. For example, a recent Saturday workshop on discipline brought parents and providers together.

Mental health consultation
The Mental Health Consultation Program at the agency offers training to child care providers in mental health issues. These issues often deal with families. For example, the program offered several workshops this year on parent-provider communication, an essential provider skill in dealing effectively with the mental health issues of young children.

On-site technical assistance
On-site technical assistance to family child care providers is funded through U.S. Department of Education contracts. Between 40-50 providers in a family child care network serve children in a subsidized child care program (e.g., children under protective services or low-income children). Technical assistance, supplies, and on-site workshops are all family-oriented.

Work and Family Resource Center
Denver, Colorado

Agency Contact	Beth Pfalmer, Director
Location	1391 N. Speer Blvd., Suite 400 Denver, CO 80204 Phone: (303) 534-3789 Fax: (303) 534-2543
Year Agency Began	1990
Region	The agency serves four Colorado counties and is expanding to serve three more counties. The population is diverse, ranging from inner city and urban families, to families in suburban and resort communities, to rural and migrant families.
Number of Staff Members	14 employees
1996 Budget	Approximately $550,000
Primary Funding Sources	Corporate dollars fund most recruitment and training. Public funding, such as Child Development Block Grants, Federal and State Department of Education funds, foundations, and business donations fund most resource and referral services.

Points of Distinction

1. A human service database and client intake database will be made available to programs serving families in communities with many high-risk children. This database will help these programs to serve children and families better.
2. A series of workshops for providers covers beginning to advanced levels of parent-provider communication, from basic communication to assertiveness and problem solving.
3. State competencies for child care workers, including one on working with families, were bolstered by the topics featured in an annual conference sponsored by the agency and by a 40-hour competency-focused family child care provider training through the agency.

Agency Overview

The Work and Family Resource Center is housed in the Division of Continuing Education at the Community College of Denver. The mission statement for the agency verifies its family-centered approach. Its mission is "to develop programs and promote policies that support families and children." Beth Pfalmer, Director, states that a "hidden agenda" in all provider training is to help nurture family-centered care.

How does the agency serve families?

The agency is collaborating with the state CCR&R network to provide an invaluable service to programs serving families. A statewide human service database and universal client intake database are being developed with funds from a Federal Family Preservation and Family Support grant. The project is being piloted in regions of the state identified as having the most children at risk of maltreatment. Part of the agency's role is to identify partners in different communities so

that data can be collected locally. Programs, and in some cases, individual providers, will serve as data collectors. The resulting resources will be made available to family resource centers and in those communities via computer or phone helplines.

An anonymous and confidential telephone helpline supports both parents and providers. Volunteers who receive 40 hours of pre-service training, supervision, and 20 one-on-one training hours staff it. Many helpline staff members are grandparents. Providers encourage parents to call the helpline with parenting questions, and use the helpline themselves to vent or to seek a listening ear about the challenges of balancing work and family life demands.

Collaborations on projects dealing with fire-starter prevention, sexuality education, early childhood learning disabilities, and child neglect furnish needed assessment, support, and education in the community and foster awareness of public issues statewide.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?

A provider assistance line
A telephone helpline, staffed by a child care provider, offers one-on-one technical assistance to providers. This includes provision of materials, coaching, and referral to other services, such as the mentor system, the resource library, the video library, and formal training opportunities. Much of the assistance helps providers meet families' needs.

A video library
Providers have access to a resource library and a video lending library. Providers are encouraged to check out videos and view them with other providers in their area (provider-provider connections are highly encouraged). Support materials to accompany the videos are in development; they will include activities and a suggested outing outside of the home (such as a visit to the local children's hospital to observe infants). These activities are meant to enrich services to families. Volunteers with child care and parenting experience preview the videos before they are ordered.

A mobile learning center
"Ad-VAN-tage" is a mobile learning center that delivers toys, equipment, curriculum, and training to 63 family child care homes. Learning materials are organized into "kits" for children. A provider can check out skill-specific toys and equipment; theme-based toys, equipment, and books; or a month-long curriculum developed by a college professor and her students. The driver/trainer delivers and explains the kits to providers. The trainer also inquires about current concerns and distributes "tip sheets" to providers, which they in turn can pass on to parents. Being able to provide families with these tip sheets empowers providers and helps them feel professional.

A mentor system
Criteria for becoming a mentor include two years of child care experience and references from peers and family. Eighty-five mentors are available to be matched with providers requiring

support and guidance. Matching is based on a mentor's area of expertise and a provider's main concerns. Mentorships are one-on-one and situation-specific. According to Beth Pfalmer, mentorship is one way that beginning providers, especially those who received non-family-supportive pre-licensure training, can begin to learn the importance of family-supportive practice.

Direct training

Direct training emphasizes concrete tools, interactive learning, and parents' perspectives. Training ranges from basic to advanced via "tracks" on different topics. For example, one track offers a series of workshops that begins with basic communication, moves to assertiveness training, and concludes with advanced problem-solving. Assertiveness training, an intermediate-level workshop, is the most popular training offered through the agency. It teaches providers how to ask for what they need, establish appropriate boundaries, and problem-solve with families.

Inclusion training is offered as part of the Colorado Options for Inclusion in Child Care. The agency sends experts into family child care homes to observe and make recommendations to providers, often by considering local community resources. For example, working with one family whose child had been expelled from four centers, the agency found a new center for the child and contacted a professional who could do a one-day observation of the child and make recommendations; they then laid out training for all staff at that center. The training also helps connect child care providers to local schools for inclusion-related support, thereby raising the status of child providers in the eyes of school personnel.

An annual conference

An annual Together-In-Training conference offers intermediate and advanced training to both center and family child care providers. The conference, now in its third year, has made progress in building networks across child care systems. Providers recognize that they are all professionals in the same arena with different resources to offer.

In 1996, conference presenters/trainers were drawn from family child care and centers, and the agency used its own curriculum and handouts in conjunction with presentations. Conference topics were intentionally matched with core competencies for Colorado professional standards for child care providers to introduce providers to competency-based training. Each curriculum provides information about parent development, family culture, and the impact of stress on family life.

Competency certificates

Colorado professional standards for child care providers outline 37 competencies at two levels — continuing education and higher education. Competencies are clustered into eight categories, one of which is working with families. Articulation across levels and colleges is in process. In response, the agency is using its annual conference to introduce to the general provider community the idea of core competencies.

Additionally, a 40-hour training for family child care providers is now competency oriented. It includes home visits by trainers to observe and assess and later follow-up on a family child care provider. Upon successful completion of the training and demonstration of competencies, providers are issued a competency certificate by the agency. Approximately 80 percent of those receiving the training earn the certificate.

A 30-hour advanced training, which builds on the CORE competency training, was added to the agency's training schedule. This class provides in-depth instruction on topics including child development, family culture, and enhancing family-centered services.

Respite care

To increase each community's capacity to support healthy family life, a recruitment, training, and referral program to support families in crisis has been developed. Individuals are recruited and trained to offer temporary, informal care for the children of families in need of a short respite. The training focuses on supportive family practice and developmentally appropriate practices for children.

Florida Children's Forum
Tallahassee, Florida

Network Contact	Susan Muenchow, Executive Director
Location	259 East 7th Avenue Tallahassee, FL 32303 Phone: (850) 681-7002 Fax: (850) 681-9816
Year Network Began	1989
Region	The Florida Children's Forum is a central network connecting 25 resource and referral agencies statewide, therefore representing vastly different areas and serving very diverse populations.
Number of Staff Members	22
1995 Budget	$10 million
Primary Funding Sources	State, federal and private foundation funds are administered to the individual CCR&Rs.

Points of Distinction

1. The network is collaborating on a three-year project to integrate health care into child care settings for families with children in child care, especially for low-income families. Provider training is one piece of this effort.
2. A quarterly parent involvement newsletter targeted at early childhood professionals addressed issues such as male involvement, advocacy, and literacy.
3. A Web site connects professionals with one another and with families across the state, offering information on policies, programs, and training opportunities, among other things.

Network Overview

The Florida Children's Forum is the second largest network of CCR&Rs in the United States. The network has its roots as an agency designed to help low-income families find affordable child care. This history explains why a cornerstone of network services is to help administer child care subsidies. The network's overarching premise is to provide and streamline services for families. Susan Muenchow, Executive Director, explains, "What we're proud of in our state, as opposed to going to welfare and the R&R for forms, [is that] they're all under one roof at the state and office level."

How does the network serve families?

Florida Children's Forum supports families by helping them secure child care. The network, especially, helps low-income families through its administration of the child care voucher system. The Forum is also involved in several partnerships to provide families with comprehensive services and to involve them in early childhood education.

Integrated health, child care, and social support services
Healthy Child Care Florida is a three-year grant project funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and coordinated through two bureaus — the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health and the Child Care Bureau. The funds support the utilization of child care environments as focal points for state and community planning to integrate health care, child care, and social support services in programs serving young children. In addition, the funds are used to enhance quality, accessibility, and availability of healthy, safe child care.

The goals of this health care project are to increase linkages to health services for families seeking child care referrals from the Forum; promote health and safety training and education for early care and education providers in Florida to reduce communicable diseases, injuries, and the need for special education placements; increase access to health insurance programs for families receiving subsidized child care services and those on the waiting list; and increase the immunization rate for children of low-income families receiving subsidized child care and their siblings.

To meet these goals, the Forum made available 14 health and safety workshops at the Forum conference; purchased health and safety resources, including curricula, video tapes, and materials for parents and providers for all child care coordinating agencies; and developed a resource guide, including abstracts on the health components of all child care coordinating agencies.

The focus of the project for the coming year will be to develop policies and procedures for the implementation of the new national Children's Health Insurance initiative and to develop mechanisms for tracking the incidence of injuries, infectious diseases, and deaths in early childhood programs.

A home instruction program for preschoolers
The Florida Children's Forum, the Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, and the Hillsborough County Center of Excellence have collaborated through a federal Department of Education, Goals 2000 grant, to expand the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) in Florida. The Forum has assisted in implementing three programs in diverse areas of the state, which serve approximately 60 children/families. The Forum is working to expand one of these programs to serve an additional 70 children/families and is beginning a new program to serve 30 children/families.

A statewide partnership to promote school readiness and parent involvement
Florida Partnership for Parent Involvement is a joint project of the Florida Children's Forum, Hillsborough County Center of Excellence, and the Department of Child and Family Studies at the University of South Florida's Florida Mental Health Institute. The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education as a part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act to promote school readiness of young children and parental involvement in children's education throughout Florida.

A major goal of the project has been to establish a Florida Center for Parent Involvement to provide training and information and support to parents, centered around five themes: family empowerment, strength, and self-advocacy; family involvement in schools and community organizations; behavior problems and behavioral support strategies for children with disabilities and school-adjustment problems; the effects of violence on child and family development; school readiness, literacy, and transition to elementary school. Tip sheets have been developed for parents and child care providers for each of the theme areas named. These tip sheets are available at the child care resource and referral agencies and are distributed to parents and providers via mail and trainings. The Forum also has conducted several parent focus groups to determine their needs and preferences for information and support in the areas of school involvement, school readiness, violence, and general parent concerns.

How does the network train providers to work with families?
Florida Children's Forum administers several training programs, although the location of such training opportunities for providers has shifted more to community colleges.

A scholarship training program
The "TEACH" (Teacher Education and Compensation Health) Early Childhood Scholarship program provides a mechanism for improving the overall quality of child care programs and family child care homes by allowing teachers and family child care home providers to continue their professional development in the field of early childhood education. The model, which links teacher training and education to compensation and commitment to the field of early childhood education, upgrades the level of education of the child care workforce. This, in turn, increases wages while decreasing turnover in the filed, assisting in the creation of a stable, well-trained, well-compensated workforce. Funded through multiple grants, the expanding program makes the educational process affordable by creating a partnership involving the teacher, the center, and the scholarship program. Training offers courses on working with families and other topics.

An early childhood training and education Web page
KIDNET (http://www.kidnet.florida.org) is a World Wide Web Internet page that provides information on current topics of interest for the early childhood training and education delivery system. The site provides access to information on upcoming conferences, resource persons for training and support services, articles from the Forum newsletter, and links to other Web sites of interest to the early child care and education community. Created in 1996 through a U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Grant, KIDNET links people in Florida who provide care to young children and their families. For example, on one KIDNET Web page, providers can read the stories of families who are on the waiting list for child care, increasing providers' awareness of the need for policies that support families' child care needs. The Forum has been able to maintain KIDNET through ongoing funding services.

A statewide directory of early childhood services
The Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services is a statewide computerized information and referral system for families, service coordinators, and other professionals who work with children and special needs. Early intervention services, specialized equipment, advocacy, parent groups,

and support services are just some of the services available through the Directory. A statewide toll-free line, training and technical assistance to 34 local sites (Central Directory Network), and maintenance of information on current research projects are available through the central office of the Florida Children's Forum. Early childhood professionals can access the line to help families identify needed services.

A parent involvement newsletter for professionals
The Forum writes and distributes a quarterly parent involvement newsletter, which is targeted at professionals who work with parents. These professionals cover a wide range of positions from parent involvement coordinators for Head Start, to pre-K early intervention specialists, to child care teachers. The newsletter highlights programs from across the state and includes information on topics such as male involvement, advocacy, and literacy.

An annual Parent Involvement Pre-Conference
The Forum holds a Parent Involvement Pre-Conference each year prior to its annual conference. Sessions focus on various programs and program components dealing with parent support, involvement, and education. The keynote address for the 1997 Pre-Conference was presented by Jim Levine of the Fatherhood Project, who discussed how to get fathers and other males involved in young children's lives.

Exemplary Individual Resource and Referral Agency
within the **Florida Children's Forum:**

Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend
Tallahassee, Florida

Agency Contact	Rue Luttrell, Executive Projects Manager
Location	2003 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 206 Tallahassee, FL 32310 Phone: (904) 414-9800 Fax: (904) 414-9810
Year Agency Began	1972
Region	Kids Incorporated serves seven counties. It is an umbrella agency that houses the CCR&R (funded by the Florida Children's Forum) as well as other programs that support children and families (including Even Start).
Number of Staff Members	100
1996 Budget	$10 million
Primary Funding Sources	Kids Incorporated is funded as part of the Florida Children's Forum network.

Points of Distinction

1. As part of a large umbrella agency, the CCR&R can connect families to a variety of important services beyond child care, such as a food and clothing bank and developmental screenings for children.
2. By implementing the Parent Services Project (PSP), and offering other occasions for joint training, the agency helps providers learn to be true partners with families.
3. One recruitment and training effort at the agency supports and empowers parents to become child care or family support professionals. Parents are encouraged to lead parent education workshops or become child care providers themselves.

Agency Overview

Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend is a multi-faceted agency that supports families and providers. The agency houses an Even Start (including its own classrooms), a HIPPY project, a food program, technical assistance to home and center providers, a CCR&R, a resource service to employers around issues of child care, a food and clothing donations bank, and a developmental screening program for children. Everyone in the 100-person agency works for the CCR&R, which focuses on helping parents find child care. The CCR&R works with other Kids Incorporated programs to serve 325 providers in seven counties. Rue Luttrell, Executive Projects Manager, explains, "We all have realized that we can not provide just child care."

How does the agency serve families?
This is a multi-faceted agency that offers a variety of services to families. Many of these services empower parents by supporting them in professional roles such as parent educator or provider. For example, parents helped present a parent training on finding employment. The agency hopes that these presentations feel accessible to parents who attend the workshops because the presenters are familiar peers. As in other CCR&Rs, the agency also offers telephone consumer counseling and child care provider referrals to parents.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
Much of the child care provider training offered through Kids Incorporated reflects a philosophy of partnership. Training often benefits parents and providers simultaneously. For example, workshops often bring parents and providers together to learn, and employment support is offered to parents wishing to become providers.

Workshops
Kids Incorporated offers a series of workshops almost nightly, as well as other ongoing training. Workshops are well attended and open to both providers and parents. The workshops focus on what parents should look for in child care and how to evaluate child care. In turn, child care providers learn what is important to offer families and what parents are expecting of them. Workshops for providers tend to focus on business and marketing of day care. In general, professionals on staff conduct workshops; however, parents also occasionally lead workshops.

Parent Services Project training
The Parents Services Project (PSP) is a national model for delivering family support and family development services in child care settings. PSP encourages a family-centered child care environment and strong parent-provider partnerships in caring for children. In one example of how PSP has been a success in the agency, Rue Luttrell notes that a parent felt that after being involved in the PSP program, she was ready to get involved with her son's PTA as soon as he entered school. The PSP model is one way in which parents and providers come together for training.

Telephone helpline
A telephone helpline is available for both providers and parents. Parents may also call and receive child care information with the aid of "Child-find," a free service through a computer database that finds providers to fit parents' specific needs.

Other training and support
Kids Incorporated assists providers in other ways as well. Parents considering becoming child care providers can have an informal mentor who is a member of the Family Child Care Providers' Association. Two early child resource centers offer parents and providers make-and-take areas, laminating machines, check-out curricula, and other supplies. Also, a mobile resource van delivers audio and visual resource kits door-to-door. Training toward a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is available through a link with Tallahassee Community College.

Exemplary Individual Resource and Referral Agency
within the **Florida Children's Forum:**

Metro-Dade Child Development Services
Miami, Florida

Agency Contact	Ana Andino, Resource & Referral Coordinator
Location	111 NW 1st Street, Suite 2210 Miami, FL 33128 Phone: (305) 375-4670 Fax: (305) 375-4671
Year Agency Began	1972
Region	This agency serves 2 million people, diverse in ethnic backgrounds: 52% of families served are Hispanic, 25% African American, and 23% white.
Number of Staff Members	Eight employees; seven full-time, one part-time
1995 Budget	$311,825
Primary Funding Sources	State and local funds.

Points of Distinction

1. The agency reaches out to parents in a number of ways to inform them about child care issues. Information booths, workshops in the community, school meetings, newsletters, and brochures all target parents.
2. Responding to local family and community child care needs, the agency collaborated with the fire department to organize child care provision for emergency workers during hurricanes.
3. In order to focus more on direct services to families, the bulk of provider training and support is referred out to local community colleges and grassroots professional associations.

Agency Overview

Metro-Dade Child Development Services helps families assess their child care needs and counsels them about their options. The Unit consists of seven full-time staff, many of whom are bilingual. Increasingly, the role of staff has been to help families negotiate the child care subsidized system, as well as help families who are above the poverty level. The staff has evolved so that its work is helping families with all child care resources.

How does the agency serve families?

Providing information to parents is at the heart of the agency's work. "Parent education has to be part of every grant," notes an agency staff member. Telephone counseling about child care availability and choices is a key service to families. Parents and providers can also use telephone helplines available in three different languages. Also, the agency conducts substantial outreach to parents, in the form of training booths at fairs and community events; back to school meetings for families; workshops in the community (e.g., in libraries and workplaces); quarterly newsletters; and leaflets and brochures that are sent out with each referral. In the spring, the agency offers tax credit seminars and specialty seminars on topics such as losing a parent to

AIDS. Child Development Services staff sees the agency as key in helping parents negotiate welfare reform. "We'll have to work one-on-one to help parents with their child care options."

Metro-Dade Child Development Services also coordinates with other agencies to meet community needs. For example, a collaboration with the local fire department resulted in a plan to expand child care during emergencies, when extra workers are needed to assist with a wide range of services. In an example of community responsiveness, this plan has helped coordinate overnight child care in a fire station during hurricanes.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
The agency has evolved to become much more of a service bureau for parents than a training place for providers. Child Development Services administration explains, "The funds drive us toward service, toward the child care piece — we refer to vocational schools and community colleges for CDA equivalency training." While training providers is not featured prominently in this agency, there are local grassroots organizations that cater to providers — professional associations for center and family child care providers.

Child Care Resources of Waldo County
Belfast, Maine

Agency Contact	Ann Simpson, Program Coordinator
Location	RR 4, Box 4635 Belfast, ME 04915 Phone: (207) 342-5535 Fax: (207) 342-2124
Year Agency Began	1989
Region	The agency serves a rural, primarily low-income population of 33,000 in a region that has suffered the exit of industry and the softening of State subsidies for fishing and farming. High rates of teenage pregnancy, child abuse, and unemployment exist.
Number of Staff Members	1.5 employees
1995 Budget	$180,112, including voucher administration and subsidies
Primary Funding	Child care subsidies account for two-thirds of the funding; the remainder comes from federal programs and contracts with private employers.

Points of Distinction

1. To address high rates of child abuse and neglect, parenting courses and support are available to families with Department of Human Services (DHS) involvement.
2. Providers and parents benefit from the agency's involvement in a community coalition that coordinates services and discusses key issues for building communities for children.
3. A telephone helpline supports isolated rural child care providers with questions about caring for children and working with families.

Agency Overview

Child Care Resources of Waldo County is a story of an agency "responding to geographical needs of an extremely depressed, very poor, rural population," according to Jane Adams, former Program Coordinator. Traditionally an area of blue collar factory employment, farming, and fishing, the region has suffered the exit of industry, the softening of state subsidies for farming, and the strain of an "over-fished" area. The agency is the smallest in the state.

How does the agency serve families?

The programs and support offered for parents and child care providers have been crafted in response to a rural community with a high population of at-risk parents. Jane Adams reflects on a rural culture in which parents tend to want their children close to home, preferably with someone they know. Families also are highly constrained by finances and the ideal child care situation often is care by relatives. In supporting both parents and providers, Adams respects the preference for family and home child care.

The reality of rural families in Waldo County creates, for Adams, a need to keep and enrich the existing prevalence of Assistance to Families with Dependent Children. She notes, "We're interested in parent empowerment. It's clear that with politics the way they are, that parents are going to have to speak up for their own needs and their children's."

The prevalence of child abuse and neglect has created a need for parenting skills classes. As part of intervention and support, DHS mandates that parents participate in such classes. Within the past five years, the agency has worked collaboratively with other community service agencies to provide classes, parent support groups, and a home visiting program for teenage and adult parents. As in all program planning in Waldo County, the agency includes transportation services and child care during the classes/groups. These services are also available to non-DHS parents. The programs attract, almost exclusively, low-income parents.

The agency also contracts with Head Start and Even Start to offer parent workshops and courses and family services such as telephone counseling and resource referrals. The courses offered utilize curriculum developed elsewhere, including: "Raising Responsible Children," and "Parents Are Teachers, Too."

How does the agency train providers to work with families?

A telephone helpline
An informal source of support and training to child care providers is available through a telephone counseling and technical assistance line. Adams notes that this resource is central to serving providers who are physically isolated from each other. Telephone calls are frequently about licensing questions, but can range from asking for help with a child who is biting, to seeking help with a parent who is delinquent in payment.

Workshops and courses
The state of Maine requires six hours of training each year for providers. Child Care Resources offers that training in the form of "active, not lecture" workshops on topics such as CPR; first aid; tax responsibility; and teaching and leading children. A small budget allows the agency to sponsor attendance at college courses and conferences for more advanced providers. With this support, providers can gradually earn degrees.

The agency is working with the Rural Education Program (REP) in Belfast to offer grant-funded training, consumer education, and referrals. REP assists low-income, single parents to obtain college degrees or GEDs and work within the community.

A community coalition
To centralize resources for families, the agency has formed the Building Communities for Children Coalition with the DHS and other area social service agencies. For five years, the group has met regularly to exchange resources and network with each other on behalf of families. This central resource has been useful for social service providers (who often feel overworked and isolated), families (who get the benefit of coordinated services), and the larger community.

Recently, a representative from a realty organization approached the group about the problem of affordable housing. He informed the group of a grant available from a state real estate organization that would provide money to subsidize housing costs. The realtor "finally knew of a place to tell about the grant," without having to figure out the maze of agencies working in support of families.

Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc.
Rochester, Minnesota

Agency Contact	Tutti Sherlock, Executive Director
Location	2116 Campus Drive, SE Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 287-2020 Fax: (507) 287-2411
Year Agency Began	1972
Region	This agency serves child care providers and families in 11 counties. Rochester has a population of approximately 100,000 surrounded by suburban and rural areas. The CCR&R has a database of over 1,500 providers and 50 centers.
Number of Staff Members	The CCR&R contains multiple programs and employs 135 people. In the CCR&R, 4 people work on training issues.
1996 Budget	$2,608,064
Primary Funding Sources	Approximately 62% is federally funded, 30% is state and county funded, and 8% is from other sources such as donations, employer contracts, and interest.

Points of Distinction

1. A family advocate at the agency helps low-income families secure child care and other services, access the child care voucher system, and gain support through a Nursery School Scholarship program.
2. Training is often decentralized and provider-led through mentor programs and child care provider professional associations.

Agency Overview

Commenting on the field, Tutti Sherlock, Executive Director, remarked, "the focus on families is growing . . . Twenty-five years ago we thought we would take a child from his home and 'fix him' and send him back, so there's been some real progress." Child Care Resources and Referral, Inc. has followed this trend by incorporating a family focus into its agency philosophy, services, and training. The agency's mission statement, "to ensure a positive beginning for young children and their families through community partnerships," attests to this.

How does the agency serve families?

Among the many innovative family services within the agency, a telephone helpline is available to assist providers and parents with any family-related issues. Telephone consumer counseling and child care referrals are also available. A family advocate on staff helps low-income families find and negotiate child care and other services. Child care vouchers for eligible low-income families (through federal, state, county, and United Way funds) will be administered through the agency. In addition, the agency administers a Nursery School Scholarship program for two-parent low-income families who choose to have the mother not work in the paid workforce. This

program enables those families (200 thus far) to attend high-quality, private nursery schools and to receive the support of a family advocate.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
Tutti Sherlock noted that child care professional training on family issues is part of Minnesota law, which may explain the training innovations found within the state, including workshops, decentralized training, a mentor program, and training for work with infants and toddlers.

Workshops, courses, and conferences
The agency provides a variety of workshops that attract a range of providers. One six-hour course addresses how to become a family child care provider. Approximately 400 people attend two large Saturday conferences, which have been held annually for the past 24 years. The conferences offer workshop choices appropriate for new or veteran providers caring for all age groups. The conferences target different audiences each year.

Decentralized training
Training also occurs in providers' homes. The agency arranges for a group facilitator (often a provider), but participants choose the training topics. As Sherlock explains of her agency's efforts to support training that is decentralized and provider-led, "We support (provider-led) family child care associations. We provide assistance in training, leadership training, and sometimes printing and postage for mailings."

Mentors
A mentor program, funded by a Child Development Block Grant, helps providers working with families with special needs children. Mentors assist providers on a one-on-one basis. The mentor meets with the provider at her family child care home or at her center for assistance. A specialist in special needs offers additional phone support for parents and providers.

Another mentor program that targets center-based child care providers matches providers with an individual mentor and offers group training. At the completion of the mentor program, the provider is promoted from assistant teacher to lead teacher, and receives an accompanying salary enhancement from his or her center.

Infant/toddler training and recruitment project
Five years ago, it became clear that more infant/toddler teachers were needed in the region. The agency obtained a grant to recruit and train new infant/toddler teachers. The new providers received 30 hours of training, equipment, and "membership" to a support group. The support group is still in existence. Currently, a team of eight trainers (trained through a statewide Bush grant) provides infant/toddler training using the Far West Labs curriculum. A module of this curriculum addresses culture and family, including issues such as conducting business with parents, listening and responding to families' needs, supporting culturally diverse families, and helping parents deal with separation.

Minnesota Agencies:
Agencies working in collaboration:

Western Community Action, Inc.
Marshall, Minnesota
and
Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.
Worthington, Minnesota

Agency Contacts	Gail Goltz, CCR&R Coordinator Sue Bruss, Training Coordinator Western Community Action, Inc. 400 W. Main Street, Suite 201 Marshall, MN 56258 Phone: (507) 537-1416 or (800) 658-2448 Karen DeBoer, CCR&R Coordinator Southwest MN Opportunity Council, Inc. 515 10th Street, Box 787 Worthington, MN 56187 Phone: (507) 376-4195 or (800) 658-2444 Fax: (507) 376-3636
Year Agencies Began	1991
Region	These two agencies serve nine rural counties. While these are essentially two distinct agencies, funding is provided by the state as one, so much work is done cooperatively.
Number of Staff Members	Combined, the two agencies are staffed by 8 people. There are 575 providers (center and home based) who are registered with the two program agency.
1996 Budget	Approximately $80,000
Primary Funding Sources	State funds are supplemented by local government, foundation, county and business support.

Points of Distinction

1. Some training-to-go topics consider how to work with families when appropriate. For example, a Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) workshop reminds providers to discuss infants' sleep positions with their parents.
2. The agencies offer an Infant Toddler Training Intensive and emphasize the importance of respect and trust in working with families and children.
3. Cultural Dynamics training helps child care providers focus intensively on diversity issues, such as families' culturally informed value systems.

Agencies Overview

These agencies combine efforts and resources. For example, some personnel "split" their time between agencies. Sue Bruss is the Infant Toddler Intensive Coordinator for all nine counties as well as for an additional five counties in another Minnesota region. She is also the overall training coordinator for five counties in ten counties across two regions. Likewise, Karen DeBoer, the program coordinator for Worthington, coordinates the Cultural Dynamics training pilot in the region. Lynn Halverson is the Training and Education Coordinator in four other counties.

How do these agencies serve families?

The agencies offer consumer counseling and resource and referral services for families over the telephone or in person at parent education meetings offered through human services, job training, or employers. They also provide parent training in conjunction with provider training when possible.

How do these agencies train providers to work with families?

Minnesota requires family child care providers to have twelve hours of training within their first year and six hours of training each year thereafter. Center-based providers must have 40 hours of training per year (2 percent of their total work time). Gail Goltz, Coordinator at Western Community Action, Inc., estimates that cooperative training programs in 14 Minnesota counties train 1,200 providers a year through workshops, conferences, and assistance to attend credit-based courses.

Training-to-Go

Because this is such a rural area, it is difficult for providers to attend workshops that are held at the agencies. In response to this situation, "Training-to-Go" workshops have been developed that can be brought by an agency representative to groups of providers who gather at someone's home or at a center. The offerings include:

- *Sesame Street* Lead Away
- Family Child Care Record Keeping
- Portrait of Promise: Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome
- *Sesame Street* PEP (designed by Children's Television Workshop)
- When an Infant Dies (about SIDS)
- Supporting Children with Play Problems
- HIV, AIDS in Child Care
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Happenin' Habitat.

These topics are of great interest to the providers, and while there is no explicit workshop on families, a collaborative approach and a focus on working with parents can be found in each. For example, the HIV, AIDS, and Child Care workshop was designed with community health agents.

The SIDS video and training has been very useful in reminding providers to talk with parents about what position they want their infant placed in for sleep.

Training for work with special needs children and their families
Project Exceptional is a state-sponsored training program that supports providers who work with special needs children and their families. Program trainers have worked with Department of Human Services trainers. A provider working with a family with special needs can call and receive mentoring and support services very quickly (within 2 - 14 hours). Providers can receive anywhere from one to sixteen hours of training.

Culturally relevant training
Cultural Dynamics is a six-hour training program mandated for all child care providers in Minnesota. The training emphasizes appropriate child care for children of all cultural backgrounds and inclusiveness toward all children and parents. The curriculum is in the process of being revised to include train-the-trainer sessions and deep examination of cultural issues. As DeBoer explains, this revised curricula goes beyond "foods and holidays" in appreciating diversity; emphasized instead is an understanding of parents as operating from their own culturally informed value systems.

Conferences
An annual conference is a source of training to providers from 18 counties. Last year's conference titled "From the Serious to the Sublime" featured two keynote speakers and a series of workshops. Training covered special needs, school-age child care, children's sexuality, working with parents, and infant/toddler care with a strong family focus.

Intensive training for work with infants and toddlers
Infant Toddler Training Intensive (ITTI) is a statewide training program developed by Far West Laboratories, which features four training modules for child care providers who work with infants and toddlers. Providers are welcome to bring a parent with them to the training. The program philosophy observes that the relationship between the child care provider and the toddler must be paralleled with attention to the relationship between the provider and parents. The training emphasizes that a foundation of trust and collaboration is necessary in providing quality care. Sue Bruss, Training Coordinator, explains that each trainer writes her own interpretation of the training modules in the certification process of Infant/Toddler Trainers. Bruss' version of the module that addresses parent-provider relations emphasizes respect and trust. The training program tries to build a sense of team spirit and affords participants time to "get into the discussion."

The program requires that a given number of trainers in each region be people of color. Gail Goltz states, "This is challenging in a rural area such as ours because of the low numbers of persons of color residing here." Another challenge is making ITTI available to all providers in rural areas as well as larger communities. "Training-to-Go," interactive television, local access cable channels, and increasing the number of trainers are all ways that the agencies are addressing this challenge.

Collaborations with local colleges and organizations
In addition to collaborating with each other, these agencies also collaborate with local colleges and organizations to share resources and expand training options. Southwest State University and Minnesota West Technical and Community College offer early childhood certificates and degrees, respectively. Head Start is housed within the Community Action Agencies, as are the resource and referral agencies. This facilitates the sharing of resources between Head Start programs and the agencies.

Training support for professional associations
Most of the nine counties have at least one family child care provider association or support group. All of these groups offer training for their members. Reflecting on her impressions of the family child care association in her region, DeBoer explains, "I thought they would want arts and crafts trainings, but really that's minimal. Issues of divorce (including legal issues that affect them as providers), death in the family, SIDS, AIDS, immunization, disease, provider contracts, and working with families are much more of their focus."

The Child Care Connection
Trenton, New Jersey

Agency Contact	Lois Penn, Acting Executive Director Nancy Thomson, Director of Resource Development
Location	2425 Pennington Road Trenton, NJ 08638 Phone: (609) 737-9243 Fax: (609)737-7635
Year Agency Began	1986
Region	The agency serves four counties in New Jersey encompassing urban, suburban, and rural areas.
Number of Staff Members	34 employees
1996 Budget	$1,448,210
Primary Funding Sources	Funding comes from an equal mix of private, state, and federal moneys. Funding is program specific. For example, providers' payments fund CDA and CCP training; private business funds the Best of Care program; and the Federal Department of Agriculture funds the Child Care Food Program through the State Department of Education.

Points of Distinction

1. Young parents with alcohol or drug dependency were able to participate in a special training program titled the "Living Center."
2. A former provider and mother of seven staffs a telephone helpline that offers neutral support for parents and providers. Providers are encouraged to invite parents to call the line directly.
3. A special "cluster" training offered at a provider's home supports providers who are working with very needy children and families using voucher subsidies.

Agency Overview

According to Nancy Thomson, Director of Resource Development, "The purpose of this CCR&R is to help the community with child care needs, referrals, training, guidance on legislative issues, and community efforts to improve the quality of child care overall, and to increase the availability and affordability of child care." Training and supporting child care providers in their attempts to bring a family focus to their work is an articulated goal of the agency. The agency strives toward this goal in several ways.

How does the agency serve families?

The Child Care Connection (CCC) offers resource and referral services by helping families assess their child care needs and quality child care options. CCC also supplies information to families about child care regulations and family child care providers. This is especially important because the state does not require licensing of family day care providers.

CCC also administers vouchers for the New Jersey Cares for Kids Program for Mercer County. This program serves parents receiving federal assistance; while receiving training or starting a job, parents are eligible for a year of child care and medical care paid for by the state. Through a contract with Work/Family Directions, CCC provides different services to Monmouth and Middlesex counties. CCC also administers the Family Development Program, part of New Jersey's Welfare Reform Program.

Some training programs are administered just for parents. For example, in the past CCC has conducted a 14-week program called "Living Center" for young parents who are alcohol or drug dependent.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?
CCC employs a number of innovative approaches to train and support child care providers, including a telephone support line, cluster group trainings, home visits, workshops, conferences, individual support, and links to other training institutions such as community colleges.

A telephone support line
An agency staff member who is a former family child care provider, licensed teacher, and mother of seven children staffs a telephone support line for providers and parents. This resource is mainly used by providers who are encouraged to consider the service a neutral resource in dealing with parents. For example, if a provider calls with an issue about a family, the support line counselor would assist the provider and then encourage the provider to have the parents call the support line directly.

Cluster group training
Three to four times per year the agency calls small "clusters" of registered providers and invites them to attend a gathering at a fellow provider's house for training. The training is usually conducted by family child care providers hired by CCC. Cluster trainings often address providers' business issues, such as contracts or parent-provider communication. Managing stress (through techniques such as yoga) is another popular topic. The provider-host receives a courtesy gift, and workshop leaders receive a small stipend for their work. A very strong network of providers meets regularly and sometimes initiates contact with CCC to request specific cluster trainings.

A special cluster group training, sponsored by the Trenton Rotary Club, targets Trenton providers working with families who use voucher subsidies. These providers have common concerns about serving very needy families, such as the overall care of the children, and benefit from the camaraderie and support developed within the cluster groups.

Training that supports earning child care credentials
Every other week CCC holds three-hour training sessions for providers working toward professional credentials. Approximately fifteen providers regularly attend and others "drop-in." Half of the attendees are working toward their Child Development Associate (CDA), a credential

that specifies training in working with families. Sessions are offered at a nominal cost to center providers and are free to family child care providers.

Workshops and an annual conference

CCC holds Saturday and evening family child care "institutes" on a variety of child care topics and in areas of technical assistance. An annual conference also allows providers to choose different paths for training. Approximately 300 family child care and center providers attend the full day conference, which features speakers from the agency and outside trainers. The conference covers quality and business topics for more experienced providers who already have an understanding of child development and working with families.

A variety of support and training

CCC offers a number of additional training opportunities for child care providers. A collaborative training offers assessment and training to over 130 providers, through home visits in which providers receive in-home training and materials and recommendations to incorporate into their practice. A pre- and post-training rating of the family child care environment is also given to providers by an early childhood specialist. Another program funded by a corporate contract offers providers one-on-one training on any topic concerning them in an effort to provide quality child care for employees. A six-week Jobs Participation Act training course that mostly serves referrals from the County Office of Training and Employment, covers CPR, First Aid, AIDS, child development; offers a three-week supervised internship in a child care center; and holds closing seminars.

Action for Children
Columbus, Ohio

Agency Contact	Betsy Loeb, Assistant Director
Location	78 Jefferson Avenue Columbus, OH 43215 Phone: (614) 224-0222 Fax: (614) 224-5437
Year Agency Began	1972
Region	Action for Children (AFC) serves 10,000 families in Franklin County, including the capital city of Columbus, and 12,000 in six other counties. In addition, six regional counties are served, totaling 12,000 families for central Ohio.
Number of Staff Members	An equivalent of 42 full-time employees.
1996 Budget	$2 million
Primary Funding Sources	AFC is funded by many sources, through program specific funding efforts. Fifty-four percent of funds are from federal, state, and local government; 19% are from contracted employee services; 10% are from gifts and fundraising campaigns; 8% are from small special private grants; 7% are from the United Way; and 2% are from other sources.

Points of Distinction

1. The agency provides information and referral through a telephone line that links parents to child care providers. The agency maintains a databank of all child care centers and registered child care homes.
2. A registered home child care network is a county-wide group of child care homes that have completed police, fire, and safety checks and have received training and home visits by agency staff. The program includes a U.S.D.A. nutrition program for children in home child care.
3. Workshops, seminars, and training materials are provided to child care professionals in both homes and centers.
4. A group of consultants at the agency work with employers to plan and provide child care benefits to workers.

Agency Overview

Action for Children (AFC) has been serving families for 25 years. The agency currently serves 12,000 families and trains 4,000 providers annually. When asked to describe AFC's philosophy, Susan Jakob, former Assistant Director, explained, "I think it is interdependence. We try to look at things globally — improve availability, quality, and affordability of care and education for children — and to do that, we need a partnership with all our customers and collaborations with families, employers, neighborhoods, caregivers, and funding agents." The agency's overall philosophy includes being responsive and collaborative in its efforts to serve the community. The agency's six program areas are: counseling parents, recruiting and screening home child care

providers, training providers, providing contracted employee services, developing collaborative resources, and providing school-age child care, including Phone Friend, a warmline for children home alone.

How does the agency serve families?
AFC offers families referrals and consumer counseling to assist them in finding child care. Also, by recruiting, screening, and training family child care providers and then making family child care referrals, AFC provides another valuable service to families. Because family child care providers are not licensed in the state of Ohio, the screening service is particularly valuable to parents. Both certified (through the Department of Human Services) and registered (through AFC) home providers are required to meet minimum basic health and safety standards. Also, licensed (through the Department of Human Services) child care centers are screened for minimum health and safety standards. AFC offers parents additional information, such as the philosophy for center-based care and information on a home provider's professional development through a training system.

Families of corporate employees receive special services from AFC through "enhanced" referral service contracts. These services ensure that a phone line is dedicated to company employees, which connects them to a counselor who will oversee all aspects of finding child care, screening child care, assessing openings, and sometimes even recruiting child care for families. The agency also provides needs assessments for companies, family wellness services, newsletters, and "ask an expert" counseling.

Each year AFC does follow-up calls with 11 percent (between 500-1,000 per year) of parents who have used the service. Parents are asked if they would be interested in participating in future interviews with the media or giving legislative input. According to Susan Jakob, this process has resulted in a bank of people who can provide parent leadership as media contacts and other resources.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?

Workshops and courses
AFC offers over 160 workshops and training collaborations to providers each year. In every workshop and course, the philosophy of working with parents is present. Featured workshops include child growth and development, parent-provider communication, and child behavior management techniques. Workshops are designed to meet the needs of both new and experienced providers. Many forms of support are aimed at both parents and providers, including workshops, a newsletter, a resource library, and a telephone helpline.

Home Network Specialists—a provider resource
When a breakdown in communication between a provider and a parent persists beyond usual AFC interventions, such as technical assistance over the telephone, home network specialists may visit the provider's home and offer support in problem-solving.

Videotapes for parents and providers
The video and training program, called "Partners in Caring," provides an overview of child care settings and programs, including interviews with providers, a parent roundtable discussion, and tips for choosing child care. The video focuses on child care providers talking about strengthening parent-provider communication. This parent training module resulted in another product, a brochure for parents titled "Take the Time to Choose." The video and brochure are available through AFC.

Distance learning for providers and parents
AFC participated in a distance learning program funded through the governor's office. Parents and providers viewed materials together in small groups, across the state at different sites.

Resource packets for providers and parents
AFC has developed provider resource packets around most requested topics. The packets have materials for the providers and the families they serve and address topics such as caregiving for infants and toddlers, caring for school-age children, and developing business contracts and policies. The resource packets were developed in collaboration with family child care providers. A packet on immunizations was produced in collaboration with the Department of Health.

A mentor program with family involvement
A mentor training program for center providers of infants and toddlers was funded by AT&T. Providers from 18 centers attended a mentor training session. An Ohio State graduate student was matched with each trainee to videotape their practice before and after the training intervention. Parents were involved in the training in several ways. First, the AT&T employee/parents chose which centers to offer the program. Second, parents were trained together with the providers in one training workshop. Finally, the training offered panel presentations which included parent panelists. The mentor training program has expanded to family child care providers.

Collaborating with parents on community initiatives
AFC also offers many opportunities for providers and parents to charter community initiatives together. For example, the agency sponsored a retreat with members of the legal, school, neighborhood, and parent communities. Also, a weekend open space meeting generated ideas and formed groups to spearhead initiatives in the community.

Family Connections
Albany, Oregon

Agency Contact	Bobbie Weber, Chair
Location	6500 SW Pacific Blvd. Albany, OR 97321 Phone: (541) 916-4896 Fax: (541) 967-0559
Year Agency Began	1988
Region	The agency serves a rural population that is mostly White, with some former migrants making a permanent home in the area and international student families receiving education at the local Land Grant University.
Number of Staff Members	5
1996 Budget	$205,000
Primary Funding Sources	Like other instructional programs at Linn-Benton Community College, Family Resources is part of the general fund, but the department also brings in funds from grants and contracts. Family Connections' funding also includes Child Care and Development Funds as well as other state and federal dollars, which come through a number of state, local, and employer contracts.

Points of Distinction

1. An annual fair for families offers a day of celebration and learning for adults and children through speakers, workshops, and displays by local family support programs.
2. Family Resources offers a certificate/degree program in child and family studies that focuses on the individual, the family, and community. Early childhood teachers can chunk short-term trainings together to equal three-credit courses in the program, addressing a problem of articulation in the child care training field.
3. A family-centered course brings together a range of professionals serving families to gain knowledge and skills for working effectively with and collaboratively for families.

Agency Overview

Family Connections, the resource and referral agency for Linn and Benton counties in Oregon, is one agency at Family Resources, a multi-program family support department at Linn-Benton Community College. A recent name change from "Linn-Benton Child Care Resource and Referral" to "Family Connections" symbolizes the agency's shift from a child care resource and referral to a family support resource and referral. Recreation for children and adults, parent education, and support groups for parents have been added to the database, and agency consultants consult on child care as well as a broader range of family support programs.

How does the agency serve families?

The services offered to families by Family Connections reflect a collaborative and family-centered approach to child care. For example, a comprehensive collaboration titled Student Arts Academics Recreation Sports (STARS), is a before- and after-school program in one community with involvement from Hewlett Packard, Parks and Recreation, the School District, Library, Arts Center, United Way, Boys' and Girls' Club, and Family Connections. This effort avoids the problem of having to transport students by offering services on-site at schools. This is a large, complex project coordinating payment, services, and collaborator needs.

Also, for over ten years, Family Resources has facilitated a community effort to support families with a day of celebration and learning for adults and children. A keynote speaker addresses the parents and providers, who then attend workshops selected from a menu of approximately 40 different topics. A full and varied day is scheduled for children in the Family Resource Fair. Parents and children are served a low-cost lunch where displays and representatives from all of the local family support programs are available.

How does the agency train providers to work with families?

Short-term courses

Child care providers served by the agency want immediately useable, practical rather than theoretical, information. Consequently, the agency covers topics in child development, business, curriculum, and relationships. For example, classes are offered in health and safety, basic discipline, parent-provider relationships, and taxes. For the most part, family child care and center-based providers take courses together (e.g., discipline, health, and safety). However, sometimes short-term courses are specific to one group of providers (e.g., family child care business).

Joint parent and provider training

"Forging the link" is a community organizing effort in which the agency is working with parents and providers in five targeted communities, offering parent training on organizing, provider training, and shared parent-provider training. This is a new endeavor bringing both parents and providers together in training.

Support for professional credentials

Providers interested in earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential are also supported. The agency brings them together in a group on a regular basis — helping them understand the CDA requirements, including a requirement in how to work with families, and keeping them connected to one another so that they can work together.

Family studies certificate/degree program

Family Resources received approval for a one-year certificate/two-year degree in Child and Family Studies, and has embarked on early childhood teacher training for the first time. Short-term courses are being articulated with degree courses, so that providers can chunk short-term training together to equal a transcripted three-credit course toward a degree. The

degree is articulated with Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College, the two four-year colleges in the geographic area.

Working with families is built into this certificate/degree training program. In collaboration with the Social Sciences Department, the first year of the program is part of a learning community, with students training for a number of human service careers (e.g., education, criminal justice, and other social service careers). A family theme is integrated throughout the two-year training and is highlighted in one quarter of the first year. The first quarter focuses on the individual, the second quarter focuses on the family, and the third quarter focuses on the community.

Family-centered course
A new course taught titled *Families in Focus: Innovative Service Strategies*, "provides a supportive learning environment for those who serve families to develop a shared understanding of, and skills for, family-focused, family-driven, and family-centered service delivery." Providers are purposely recruited from a wide range of agencies so that the course can mirror cross-discipline and cross-agency work needed for a family-driven focus.

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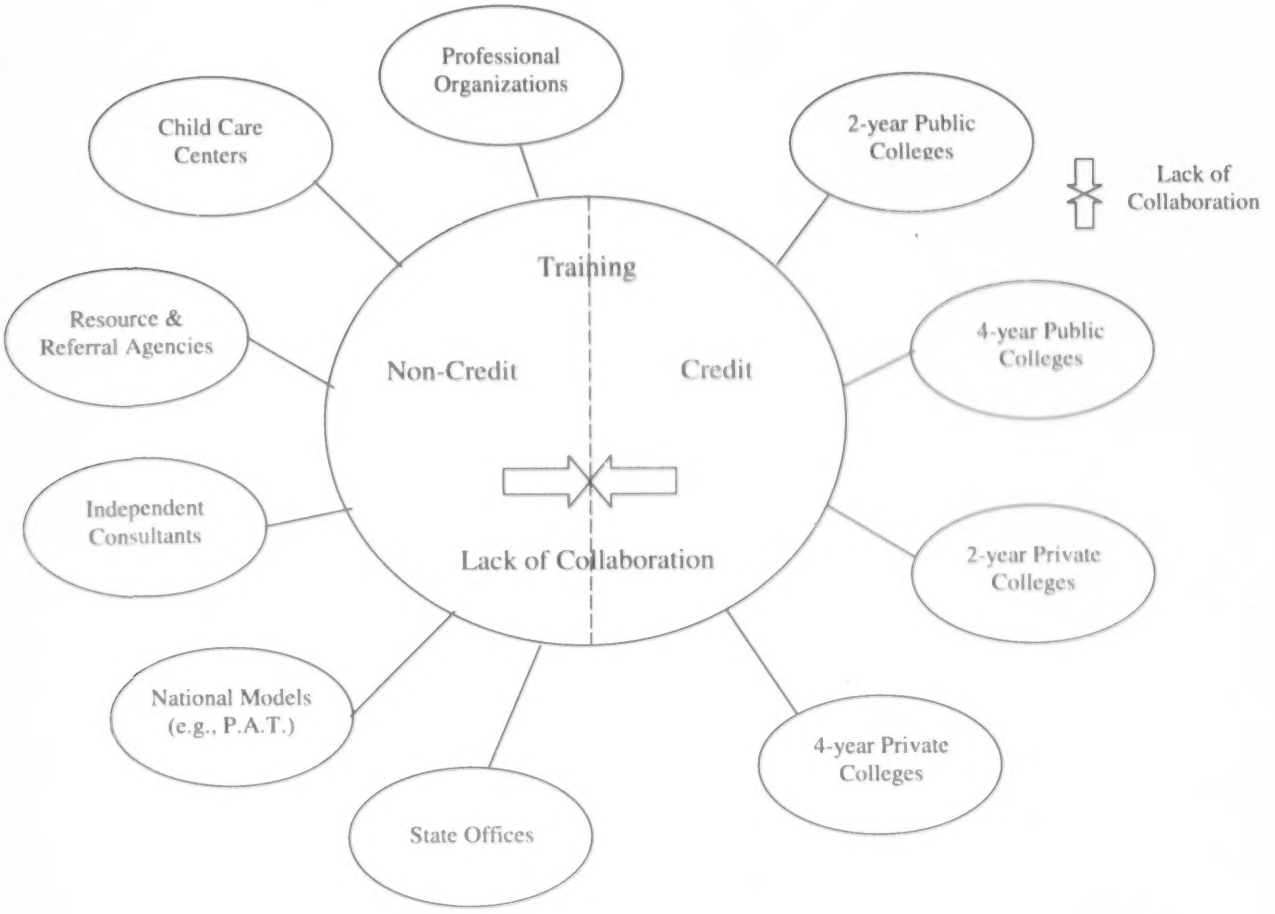
Mapping Child Care Training



APPENDIX B:
CCR&R SURVEY FORM

Resource and Referral Agencies
Training Child Care Professionals to Work with Families

I. Please indicate with a check which of the following training topics are: 1) offered through your agency, or 2) not offered and needed in your service area.

	OFFERED	NEEDED
■ TRAINING IN: FAMILY SUPPORT PRINCIPLES.		
• focusing on the concerns of children *and* parents	_____	_____
• respecting parents' own understanding of their needs and goals	_____	_____
• focusing on family strengths	_____	_____
• sensitivity to families' background (socioeconomic, cultural)	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____
■ TRAINING IN: INVOLVING PARENTS IN PROGRAMS.		
• fostering positive communication between providers and parents	_____	_____
• negotiating differences with parents	_____	_____
• utilizing parents as volunteers	_____	_____
• involving parents in governance	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____
■ TRAINING IN: SUPPORTING PARENTING.		
• educating parents about quality child care	_____	_____
• organizing/facilitating parent education classes/workshops	_____	_____
• supporting parents' supplemental teaching at home	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____
■ TRAINING IN WORKING FOR PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION.		
• identifying developmental delays	_____	_____
• identifying conditions associated with abuse and neglect	_____	_____
• dealing with families under stress	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____

continued

	OFFERED	NEEDED
■ TRAINING IN SOCIAL SUPPORT.		
• providing time for parents to talk with each other about parenting issues	_____	_____
• family recreational/social events	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____
■ TRAINING IN: MEETING IN FAMILIES' NEEDS.		
• referrals to other agencies and services (ESL, mental		
• health services, job training	_____	_____
• offering support services such as food bank,		
• clothing drives, dry cleaning, meal service	_____	_____
helping parents with the transition of child to new		
• providers or schools	_____	_____
• other _____	_____	_____

II. Please use this space to describe any additional training provided in the area of family support that has not been covered by the topics above, or to provide any additional information you feel would be helpful.

III. Please give us an estimate of the total number of child care professionals who have participated in your training in the past year: _____

IV. Of the total number of people who have participated in your training this past year, please estimate what percentage has come from the following professional categories:

Home child care providers _____% Center staff _____ %

Directors/Administrators _____% Other _____%

If we have any additional questions, please indicate the person we should contact at your agency:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address _____ Phone: _____

APPENDIX C:
CCR&R SURVEY METHOD

Survey construction

We constructed a brief survey of CCR&Rs to answer two overarching questions: 1) What types of family-supportive training are available to child care providers through CCR&Rs? and 2) What types of family-supportive training are needed by child care providers, but are not currently offered by CCR&Rs? Categories of family support reflected in the survey were developed from previous research by the Harvard Family Research Project (Shartrand, Kreider, and Erickson-Warfield, 1994) and by experts in family support (e.g. Dunst, 1994; Larner, 1995). Respondents indicated if training was either offered or needed (See Appendix B for survey form).

Sample selection and data collection

In 1996, a comprehensive list of resource and referral agencies was obtained by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). Surveys were mailed to all child care resource and referral agencies in the United States. In 1996, this list included 360 agencies. Today the membership has expanded to 530 agencies. After initial mailings and two sets of follow-up phone calls to every fourth agency, a total of 173 surveys were returned. The agencies that responded to the survey varied greatly in terms of who received training. Eighty-seven agencies trained primarily family child care providers while 53 agencies primarily trained center-based providers. The number of people trained annually ranged from 30 to 8600 across agencies.

Data analysis

The percentage of agencies that "offered" and "needed" different types of family-supportive training was tabulated. The survey examined six family-centered types of training for providers: family support principles, involving parents in program, supporting parenting, working for prevention, social support, and meeting families' needs.

APPENDIX D:
NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Informants for the interviews were selected according to a two-pronged nomination procedure. First, when our brief written survey was mailed to each CCR&R, it was accompanied by a form for nominating programs with family-centered provider training. Thirty-six nomination forms were returned. A review of the family-centered training within each nominated agency resulted in an initial list of potential informants. Telephone calls to this initial list of agencies gathered additional information about training.

In the second prong of the nomination procedure, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) past or present board members representing different regions were contacted and similarly asked to nominate CCR&Rs for this study. In some cases, it was evident that the respondents themselves were important informants, and thus they were nominated based on our conversation. A second list of potential key informants was generated from this procedure. Both lists were reviewed, and combined to form a master list that reflected diversity of geographic region and demographics, without redundancy.

APPENDIX E:
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Agency Description

[Follow-up questions based on materials already received]
Can you give me some of the history of your agency?
When was your agency founded?
Can you tell us the demographic characteristics of the families served by your agency?
Can you tell us the number, demographic characteristics, and qualifications of your staff?

Agency Focus

What are the primary goals and philosophy of your agency?
In what ways do you consider your agency to be family-centered?

Services to Families

In what ways does your agency directly serve families?

Child Care Provider Training

What types of training or enrichment activities do you offer child care providers?
Which, if any, of the training options offered by your agency prepares providers to work with and support families?

> What format do these trainings take?
> Who attends?
> What family-related topics do you cover?
> What challenges or constraints do you face?

Can you describe any collaborations with or referrals to other agencies to provide family-centered training?
Is family-centered training specific to center-based or home-based providers? If so, how?

Funding

How is your agency funded? What was your annual budget this year?

Evaluation

Have you assessed the training offered by your agency? If so, how?
Could you send a copy of any program or training evaluations to us?
Can you share any stories to describe the success of your agency's efforts to train providers to work with families?

Respondent Background

What is your professional title?
What is your background (as a parent, child care provider, CCR&R professional)?

In Closing

Can you provide any other information or materials that would help explain the services and training available through your program?

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Publications on Early Childhood Care and Education

- The *Families Matter* Series:
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